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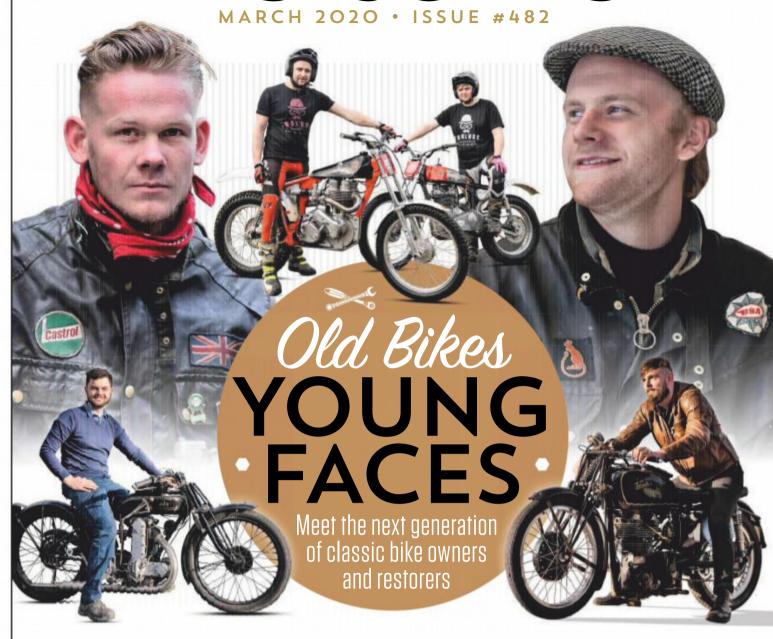
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Welcome



"Classic bikes? Let's face it – there'll be no future for them once we're gone."

"Our mainstream classics will be worthless in just a few years..."

"The only old stuff that will retain any value will be the upmarket collector's bikes."

"We'll soon have lost all the engineering skills and knowhow to keep these things going."

How many times have you heard conversations with those sentiments when you're at some kind of old-time bike event, supported by old-timers, poring over old-timer motorcycles?

Well, I'm an old-timer and while there's nothing wrong with us old-timers messing with old bikes, I'm totally stoked* about the future of classic motorcycling. Thing is, you don't have to look that far to find young people living the whole classic bike dream, whether it's restoring old clunkers, re-engineering dead flat-tankers or riding the wheels off old classics, youngsters are out there, doing what we did in our youth.

Rick and I were talking one day about how much positivity Lewis' Excelsior restoration story has engendered – and musing on just how many youngsters were out there messing about with old motorcycles.

"What we need is to feature more youngsters with old bikes – and hopefully that will generate even more interest," said Rick.

Within a few minutes the plan was hatched, and the challenge taken. We'd do a complete issue of *Classic Bike* featuring only youngsters with old bikes. And, just to add a bit of pressure, there would be a maximum age limit of 30 years for anyone to be featured in the issue.

Well, here it is. I know it's a shocker seeing *Classic Bike* full of old bikes owned, ridden or fixed by such fresh-faced sprogs, but it's proved that the future of classic bikes is in good hands.

Hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed creating it. For us, an issue of *Classic Bike* has never been more rewarding...

*Young person's speak for being excited about something – apparently!

Enjoy the issue



Gary PinchinEditor

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More brotherhood, this time Ariel-based, with the Butterworth boys



Teen Tom Dunhill's bedroom carpet is more cluttered than most – with a BSA B44

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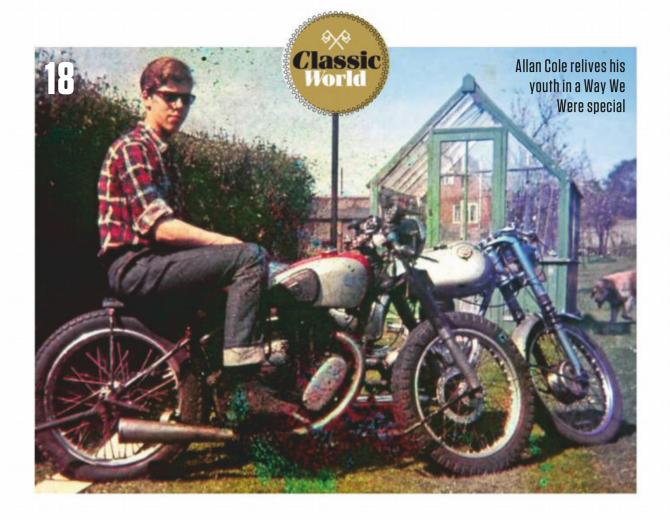
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Mecum Las Vegas auction rakes in £17.43 million (and a few UK sales that made a little less...)



MARCH 2020

NEWS WAY WE WERE



A classical education

Cokethorpe School has built into its curriculum a lesson that deals with a different type of classics, with its Build-a-bike Bantam project

WORDS: RICK PARKINGTON PHOTOGRAPHY: GARY MARGERUM

I'VE JUST VISITED a school that's very different to any Cokethorpe is an independent day school that takes educational establishment I attended in my youth – in a good way. After an invitation from Simon Carter, who teaches History and Politics at Cokethorpe School, just outside Oxford, I went along to take a look at their 'Builda-bike' life-skills programme. They have a group of around 15 students, ranging from 11 to 18, currently involved in the restoration of a 1960 BSA Bantam.

Simon said they have been following with great interest the progress of young Lewis Perry's Excelsior restoration – which I've been helping him with and reporting on in *CB* - and wondered if I was free to pay them a visit. It was an opportunity not to be missed, and Lewis wanted to come too, so off we went to see the project and meet the group.

boys and girls aged four to 18 and the project group has two female members (although they were absent for our visit). Simon explained that one issue with the group was the need to divide jobs according to age – or more precisely, strength – so younger pupils tackle jobs like dismantling the carburettor, leaving senior students to apply greater body weight to seized chassis bolts.

Long-term motorcyclist Simon enjoys off-duty bike chats with fellow enthusiast (and Design Technology teacher) Colin Johnson; the idea for the programme arose when one of Colin's A-level DT students, Henry, asked if he could clean up some Honda parts in the workshop.

The first group project was stripping one of Simon's old •





'THE STUDENTS RANGE FROM 11 TO 18, WITH TWO FEMALE MEMBERS'



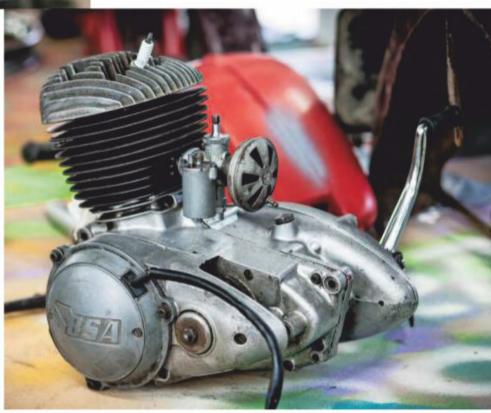
ABOVE: Bantam project combines technology with history



ABOVE: Rick does his 'supply teacher' routine with Lewis and student Henry

LEFT: Teachers Colin (left) and Simon whose shared interest in bikes is behind the group

RIGHT: The Bantam engine has been cleaned up – and now it's sparking and ready to run











MZ engines, learning how it worked and the techniques needed for dismantling. The breakthrough came when Simon discovered his uncle had a disused BSA Bantam – and that he'd be delighted to see it go to a good cause.

Initially intending just to get the bike in working order, it soon developed into a restoration. Simon recalls: "When we removed the tank, the frame beneath was black and the tank itself has been bright red at some point, so this maroon isn't the factory finish. We wondered if it was an ex-GPO bike – but not according to the original logbook, so maybe it was a cancelled Post

<u>'THEY MANAGED TO GET A</u> SPARK USING THE OUCH! TEST'

Office order that was repainted? Of course as a History teacher, this made a great topic to discuss!"

Thus far, the class has stripped the Bantam, cleaned everything up, repainted a few parts and rebuilt one of the wheels. "We didn't do quite as well as Lewis!" admits Colin. "It took us three goes using YouTube videos, etc. The first time we had nearly all the spokes fitted before we realised the rim was the wrong side up!"

I took along my cutaway 1928 BSA 350cc engine and explained the workings of a four-stroke engine – making the point that over the past 100 years, surprisingly little has changed in petrol engines beyond digital fuelling control. After that, Lewis explained how he'd become involved and we took a look at the project Bantam, offering advice on problems like a plunger unit seized in the frame, how to repair damaged engine mountings and whether the forks were worn enough to need new parts.

ABOVE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): Rear wheel took three attempts to build, the front should be easier; students examine Rick's cutaway 1928 BSA engine: 'Doesn't *look* the same as my dad's car engine...'; Henry, whose Honda CD175 project provided the original idea; Rick finding it hard to resist getting stuck into the build himself

The group has already freed off a seized piston and managed to get a spark – confirmed, as George who cleaned the points advised, by using 'the Ouch! Test'. Ah yes, we all know that one!

Some of the older members of the group are already 'petrolheads'. Max, for example, is restoring a VW Beetle at home and it was interesting to talk to A-level DT student Henry, whose Honda was the initial inspiration.

"I don't have a background in bikes – but I like making things work. I started off fiddling about getting my greatgrandad's Briggs and Stratton mower engine going, plus I drive an old Renault Clio – not as old as the Bantam but very different to a new car, especially the brakes!" he says.

"Initially I wanted to restore a classic car, but it was too expensive. Then I thought about a British bike – but again they were outside my budget, so I ended up with the Honda CD175. It's coming along; I managed to make a bearing press that I needed on the lathe here and I'm planning to fit a twin-carb CB175 top end for more performance. But I've never actually ridden a bike and the big problem is that I need to get two licences before I can legally ride a 175cc aged 18."

Hmmm... people say that kids today aren't interested in old bikes, but the combination of overpriced projects and restrictive licencing laws hardly adds to the appeal. Aged 17 in 1981, my test cost £10, took half an hour – and I just scraped in on a 250 before the 125cc law.

Henry isn't yet sure what he wants to do when he leaves school. He's drawn to the sea, so maybe he'll be heading for the Navy, but somehow I suspect he will always be fiddling with something mechanical, "Well, I did a lot of Lego as a kid," he grins.

Before leaving Henry and the workshop, Colin showed us a mating spline set that Henry had designed and •

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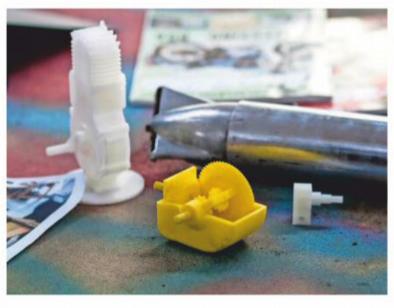
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LEFT: Not having to stand in the corner of the classroom with a differentshaped hat was a new experience for Parkington Snr





LEFT: The students have access to modern technology including a 3D printer, too – here are two printouts they made earlier

generated using the 3D print process. "At present we are printing in ABS," Colin explained. "But we are moving on to an organic cellulose that is compostable."

This pairing of the latest manufacturing technology and the oldest form of waste disposal reflected one of the subjects I raised with the group: the idea that although old vehicles are slated as environmentally unfriendly, surely the disproportionate amount of resources used and pollution generated by vehicle manufacture makes repair and restoration a more sustainable act than buying new 'low emission' transport. This is something young people often seem to understand more clearly than their parents, who maybe just want the excuse to buy a new car.

THE HEADMASTER HAS BEEN VERY SUPPORTIVE

Our time with the students up, Simon and Colin took us to the staff room for refreshments. "We had a trip to the National Motorcycle Museum last week," says Simon, they were very accommodating and started some bikes up for us, which everybody enjoyed – especially me, because I got to ride one!

"I first contacted James Hewing a few years back to see if he did 'outreach visits' and he kindly brought three bikes: a 1914 Triumph Model H, 1938 Triumph T100 and a Norton F1 Rotary. They fired them all up and rode them around the grounds!"

Colin chips in: "We had pretty well the whole school out on that day – Henry was one of them, so maybe that was partly what inspired him."

It's a happy chance that Colin and Simon are both interested in bikes; the BSA project neatly combines their professional disciplines of history and technology, adding something to both subjects that gives them high hopes for the project's survival. "You always get some turnover in project groups, "says Simon. "But core members have really stuck with it. We've grown to capacity and the Headmaster has been very supportive. The project even seems to have become a talking point for senior leadership and there's always considerable interest and enquiries on parents' evenings."

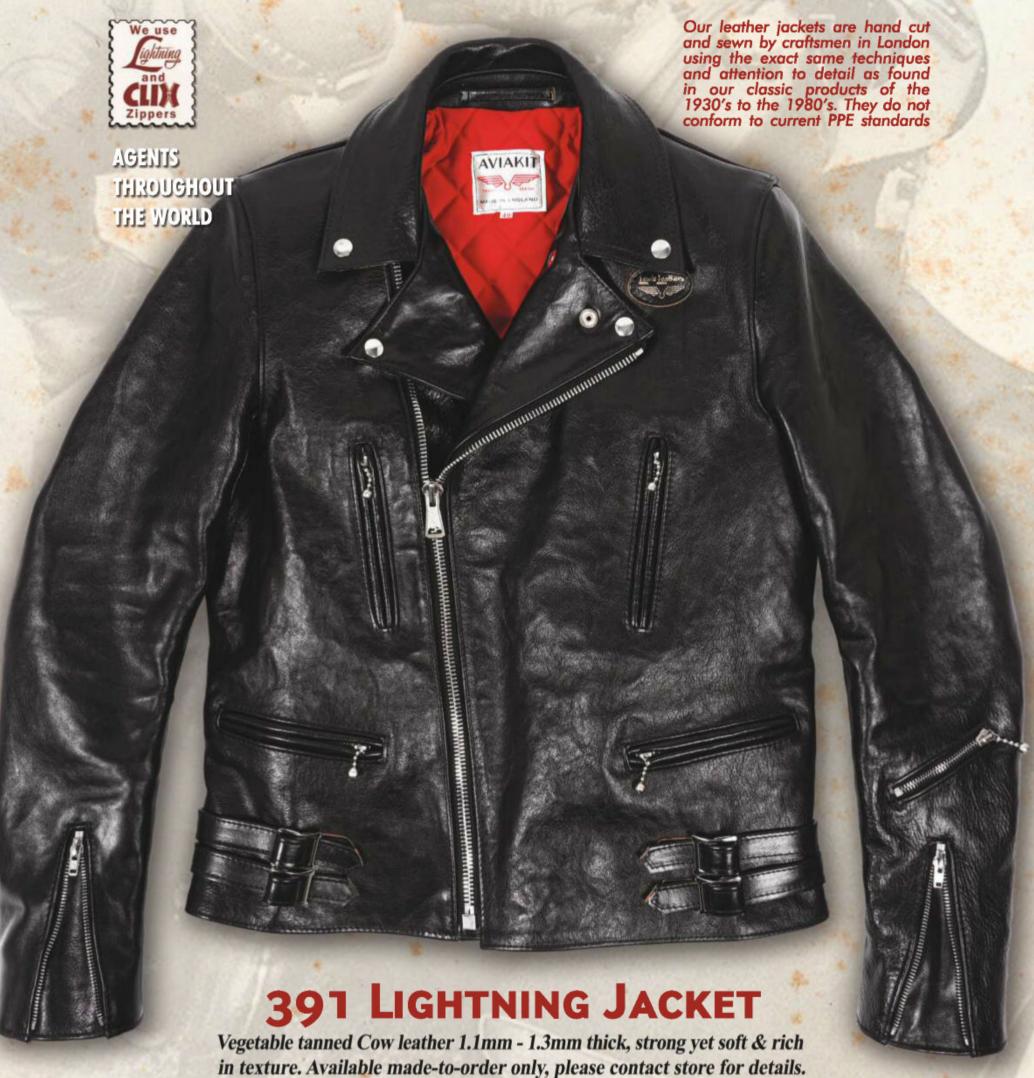
That's amazing; could it be that education always needs new ways to positively engage students – and classic bikes are now seen as novel, fun and far less threatening to parents than 'noisy and dangerous' motorcycles used to be? "I think so," confirms Simon "And if any other schools want to try something similar, I'll happily offer any help and advice I can.

"Budget is the biggest problem facing any school - we were lucky finding a perfect bike with the Bantam and we'll be selling spares that came with it to buy the parts we need. Hopefully, by the time the Bantam is finished something else will have come along to keep the group going."

Driving home, I asked Lewis whether a similar scheme would work at his (state) school. "Maybe... I'm not sure how many would be interested... but it's the infrastructure – teachers, facilities, space to do it, it all takes funding. My school is currently trying to raise money for a new roof!"

Wow, that's sobering; when I was at school, 'fun' meant more than 'funding', but today's generation seems to get hammered with responsibility very early. Between saving the school and saving the planet, maybe a bit of fun with old motorbikes is doing everybody good.





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Northern exposure

Scotland's number one bike show fires up in Edinburgh once again

AS USUAL, THE Classic Bike magazine Classics Pavilion will be the place to be as our sister-title MCN's annual Scottish show opens its gates. As early as the new year, 70 classic owners had already confirmed their entries for the prestigious concours competition and there should be around 350 classic bikes on display over the weekend once the trade and club

displays are factored in. That makes the show the biggest collection of classic iron in Scotland – reason enough to head for Edinburgh.

Outside, the *Classic Bike* fire-up paddock adds a glorious soundtrack to the event, while back indoors, our sister-title *Built* once again curates the 'Built Not Bought' custom show, where you will be able to catch the very best in modified motorcycles – classic, vintage, retro customs... and even choppers.

Guest of Honour is classic fan and trials legend Dougie Lampkin, and there'll be plenty of modern machinery on display, too – including the latest 2020 models from lots of the major manufacturers, alongside a busy retail zone.

scottishmotorcycleshow.com



Beautiful south

The south-east's classic show season gets underway at last

You know spring is finally with us when the Elk Promotions' first show of the season opens its doors. As usual, their season-opener is at the South of England Showground and offers the now-traditional five halls and acres of outdoor space covered in jumble, trade and club displays and some tasty pre-1980 classic metal. 'Mr Triton' Dave Degens is guest of honour, so expect some tasty Tritons. There are cheap garage clear-out pitches available from just £10, so it's a great opportunity to clear some space in the garage. And there's a 'bikes for sale' display area set aside as well. Even the catering is a cut above average. elkpromotions.co.uk

M A R 2 2

Pioneer pastures new

Sunbeam Club's Pioneer Run gets out of town for a more genteel finish

A change to the finish venue marks the 81st running of the world's premier event for pre-1915 motorcycles and tricycles, the Pioneer Run. Following a safety-inspired change to the route last year, the organising Sunbeam MCC have moved the finish of their flagship event out of town, to the wide open spaces of Brighton City Airport. Riders of single-speed, clutchless veterans will breathe a sigh of relief as the new finish avoids a trafficlight-heavy run into Brighton along the coast road.

It's still the year's best opportunity to ogle 100-yearold bikes piloted with elan on 21st-century roads. Catch the 8am start from Epsom, then head to Shoreham to see the full-house entry roll over the new finish line. **Sunbeam-mcc.co.uk**



MARCH

7 Rufforth Autojumble, Rufforth Park, Yorkshire Rufforthautojumble.com

8 Malvern Drive-in Classic Car and Motorcycle Show at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire Classicshows.org

8 Classic Bike Day, Ace Café, Stonebridge, London Iondon.acecafe.com

28/29 The Manchester Bike Show, Event City, Trafford, Manchester Manchesterbikeshow.com

APRIL

5 National Twinshock motocross at Polesworth, Staffordshire Nationaltwinshock.co.uk

11/12 Red Marley Hill Climb and trial at Great Witley, Worcestershire Redmarleyhillclimb.com

11/12 British Historic
Racing race meeting at
Mallory Park Circuit,
Leicestershire
Britishhistoricracing.co.uk

13 Ashford Classic Motorcycle Show and Bikejumble, Ashford Market, Kent Elkpromotions.co.uk

25/26 Carole Nash International Classic Motorcycle Show, Stafford County Showground, Staffordshire. Classicbikeshows.com

26 Vintage and Classic Japanese Bike Day, the Ace Café, Stonebridge, London London.acecafe.com

MAY

1/2 Pre-65 Scottish Two
Day Trial, Kinlochleven,
Lochaber
Pre65scottish.com

3 Spring autojumble at the Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, New Milton, Hampshire Sammymiller.co.uk



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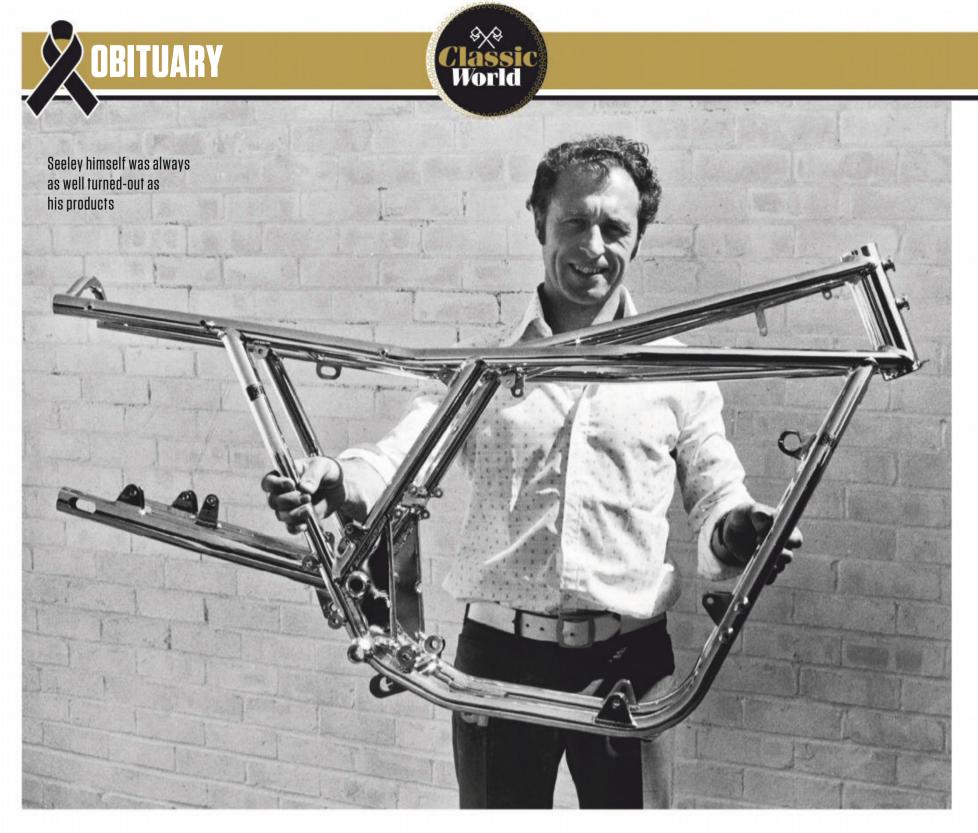


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Colin Seeley 1936-2020

Steeped in the motorcycle world from his youth, the renowned racer went on to become a world-famous frame-maker and prime industry figure

WORDS: MICK DUCKWORTH PHOTOGRAPHY: SEELEY ARCHIVE & BAUER ARCHIVE

ONE OF THE most dynamic and creative figures in British motorcycling, Colin Seeley, has died aged 84. Among the world's top sidecar racers of the 1960s, he not only built a respected marque around excellent frames, but also berated organisers to improve UK racing, founded a charity and remained active on the UK bike scene until he became ill in 2019.

Born to motorcycling parents, Colin grew up in Bexleyheath in south-east London's outer suburbs. He first took to the road on his father's pre-war 1000cc HRD-Vincent sidecar outfit and diced with friends from the Oakdene Cafe, a bikers' haunt off the A20 near Wrotham. Starting out in motor trade jobs, he set up his own motorcycle shop at Belvedere in 1956. His first competitive riding was in scrambles on a 500cc Triumph and he launched into sidecar racing in 1960, with an ex-Eric Oliver Norton outfit.

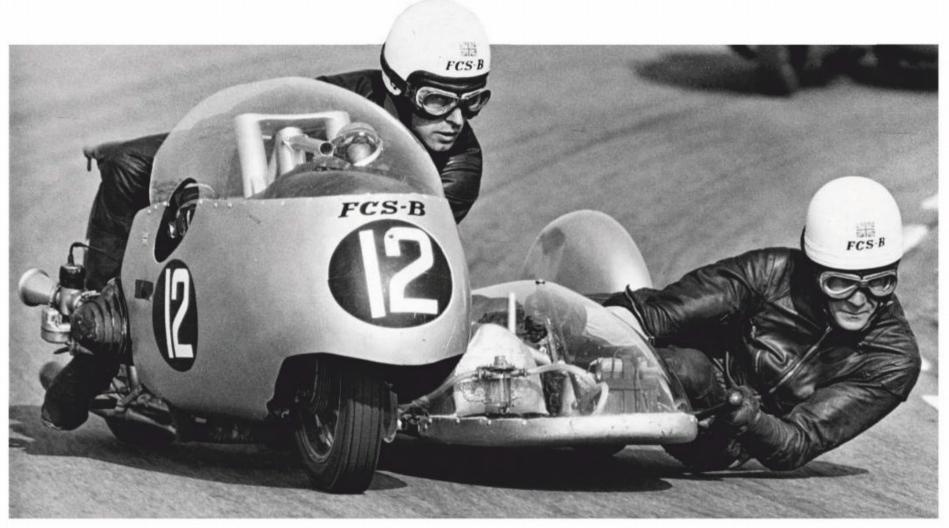
For 1961, he bought a new 500cc Matchless G50 from the Associated Motor Cycles factory; he built it into a racing outfit with a Canterbury sidecar – it was tidy,

gleaming machine, setting the pattern for all subsequent Seeley products. They were never inelegant or makeshift.

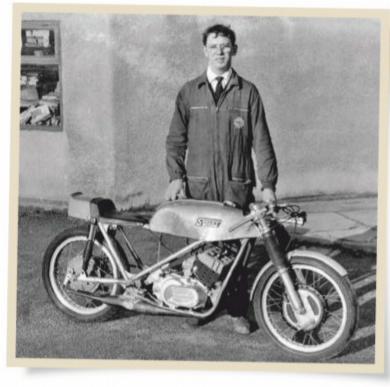
Passengered by friend and working associate Wally Rawlings, Seeley was soon mixing it with the top Continental BMW crews, taking sixth place in his first Isle of Man Sidecar TT in 1961 and third in '62 after a rebuild with a Watsonian chair. On short circuits, he specialised in lightning starts and described his own driving as 'bloody aggressive' in a 1989 *CB* interview.

Despite a six-speed Schafleitner gearbox fitted for '63, the G50 outfit couldn't catch the BMW elite. But in '64, Florian Camathias loaned Seeley a Rennsport-powered outfit, in return for him backing-up the Swiss sidecar ace's championship bid with a four-cylinder engine lent by the Gilera factory. Seeley won the '64 Dutch GP, his best world championship result, was second in the TT and finished third in the world championship. Poor reliability kept the Gilera out of contention.

Acquiring their own BMW outfit from British driver Trevor Layton for 1965, Seeley and Rawlings rebuilt it,







but difficulty obtaining spares led to a disappointing GP season. However, an ex-Camathias Fath-tuned BMW engine acquired after the Swiss veteran was killed at Brands Hatch in October 1965 took the British team to another championship third place.

For 1966 Seeley launched an ambitious enterprise that would prove successful and firmly establish his name in the motorcycling world. He had sponsored Manxman Sid Mizen on a G50, and during 1965 replaced the frame with his own lighter tubework. For the next season he spent heavily on eight G50 and four 350cc AJS 7R engines from AMC, whose racing department had closed in 1963. A small but skilled manufacturing team set up under the Colin Seeley Racing Developments (CSRD) banner produced frames and other cycle parts with Reynolds 531 tubing, creating a solo Seeley equipe.

Wins during 1966 by CSRD's seasoned rider Derek Minter proved that the svelte Seeley G50 with a gold fairing would outpace stock G50s and Norton Manxes in super-competitive UK short circuit racing. When AMC TOP: Colin Seeley and passenger Wally Rawlings on their way to winning the 1964 Dutch Grand Prix on a Camathias BMW

ABOVE LEFT: Derek Minter on a Seeley Matchless G50, Mallory Park, 1966

ABOVE RIGHT: John Cooper with a Seeley Yamaha Yamsel. It proved a winning blend went into receivership in the autumn, Seeley headed-off rivals to buy the manufacturing rights, drawings and tooling for the 7R and G50 engines. He also bought Manx rights, later sold on to John Tickle.

Pessimists said the venture would fail within weeks, but in 1967 ready-to-race Seeley racers and six varieties of self-construction kit were on offer to customers. Minter moved on and John Blanchard became the team rider, turning in a 100mph lap in the '67 Senior TT. John Cooper acquired Minter's 500 Seeley to collect a stack of wins over several seasons, while regular Seeley customer Ron Chandler won the 1967 500cc British championship. Dave Croxford took over as team rider in 1968, winning both the King of Brands and Master of Mallory titles.

Swiftly improved to a MkII, the Seeley rolling chassis became a mainstay of 500cc grids, where the G50-powered version was the best ride short of a works machine and was making a last stand against the rise of two-strokes. As well as running production, Seeley continued sidecar racing in 1967 and built a solo racer







ABOVE: Colin Seeley with a 500 Seeley Roadster in November 1970 around the dohc four power unit Helmut Fath and Dr Peter Kuhn developed for an (ultimately successful) sidecar world title bid. Sadly, the ambitious solo project foundered because of a row between Seeley and Blanchard.

Mike Hailwood twice rode 500cc Seeley G50s when other works machines were not available, winning a race at Oulton Park in 1968 and getting the first single home in fifth at the 1969 Mallory Park Race of the Year.

After crashing his fast but ill-handling 350cc Yamaha TR2, John Cooper installed its engine in place of the 7R motor in his 350cc Seeley and loved the result. It was a winning blend – and an official Yamsel using a version of the latest MkIII super-light frame soon joined the Seeley catalogue. Anticipating a two-stroke takeover of the 500cc class, Seeley created QUB prototypes around the 61bhp single-cylinder engine designed by Dr Gordon Blair of Queen's University Belfast.

The original QUB development rider was Brian Steenson. His death following an accident on a Seeley G50 MkIII in the 1970 Senior TT was a great blow for Colin, as was the loss of Seeley-supported Mick Collins in TT practice that year.

The Seeley chassis' reputation for superb handling led Ducati to commission frames for its 500cc ohc V-twin GP contender of 1971, while Stan Shenton ordered frames to build Triumph triples for his Boyer team. The fledgling Suzuki GB team bought a chassis for a semiworks TR 500 motor that launched Barry Sheene's career on larger-capacity machines. It would be followed by a

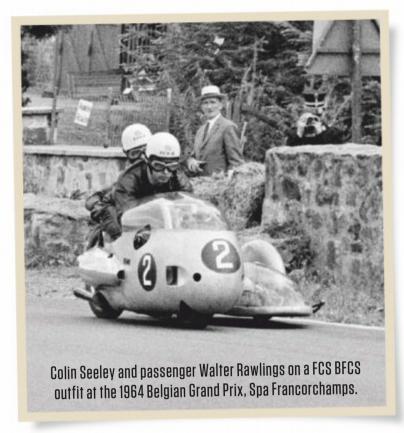
TR750-powered Seeley and the innovative monocoqueframed TR500 of 1973. A 750cc Kawasaki H1 triplepowered stroker was built for Seeley team rider Pat Mahoney and a frame was supplied for Paul Smart's 750cc US Kawasaki team machine. The final frame for British engines was the MkIV, which could accommodate Norton's 750cc Commando engine and was raced to good effect by the Gus Kuhn team.

The first road-going Seeley, the magnificent G50-powered Condor, was priced at £1100 when a 750cc

'COLIN SEELEY BUILT A RESPECTED MARQUE AROUND EXCELLENT FRAMES'

Triumph Trident cost less than £700. Only seven examples were sold after it was unveiled for 1971, the year in which Seeley merged his busy operations into Motor Racing Developments (MRD) set up by Bernie Ecclestone, later to be famous as Formula One car racing's supremo. There was promise of expansion, including a new factory where Seeleys would be built alongside Brabham F1 cars.

Seeley came close to ruin when Ecclestone dropped his backing, but he weathered a financial crisis and gathered







ABOVE: Left to right: Rex White, Colin Seeley, Dave Hall and Barry Sheene going over a Seeley Suzuki 750cc

LEFT: Ian Simpson (25) and Phil Borely (30) on the Duckhams Nortons in the F1 British Supercup at Cadwell Park, 1994



his technical team together to create the CB750 Four-based Seeley Honda roadster. While costly, the handsome machine was in high demand and found customers in a dozen countries worldwide.

A tie-in with Honda UK led to Seeley supplying cosmetic replicas of Phil Read's 1977 Formula 1 TT-winning four, replaced by the similar Honda Britain CB750 SS, when Read and Honda fell out in 1978. Following construction of a prototype around an engine sent from Japan, Seeley was contracted to build several hundred of Honda's TL 200E trial bikes, as well as a small number of special RTL 240 versions for factory riders. The new factory at Erith was occupied for TL200E production, but although it was a fine machine it was not a lucrative venture for Seeley.

In 1979 Colin was devastated by the death of his wife Joan. A former secretary at the AMC works, she had been fighting cancer for several years. He threw his energies into setting up the Joan Seeley Pain Relief Memorial Trust in her memory, with launch support from high-profile sporting figures. Giving up motorcycle manufacture, Seeley returned to retail by fitting out the Erith premises as the pioneering Seeley Qwik-Fit while-you-wait bike tyre centre, which he ran from 1981 until 1984. Ecclestone lured him back into car racing, where after trying to manage the troubled German ATS Formula One team, he became team manager at Brabham until sacked by Ecclestone in 1987. Meanwhile, he briefly ventured into care home ownership, assisted by

Eva who would become his second wife in 1991.

Offering his services to Brian Crighton's rotary-powered team in 1991, Colin set up Seeley Sport Management (SSM) and brought in Duckhams Oils and other sponsors. In 1994, the professionally turned-out Duckhams Crighton Norton equipe won the UK's H.E.A.T. Superbike series after two storming seasons. The demise of Norton's rotary-making facility at Shenstone and the difficulty of homologating the rotary for the Superbike class saw Seeley change marques. He ran the Castrol Honda Superbike Team in 1995 and the less successful Ducati-mounted GSE team in 1996. SSM then concentrated on managing an individual rider, young Australian Karl Muggeridge, guiding him towards his eventual World Supersport title in 2004.

Colin had the satisfaction of seeing the Seeley G50 and 7R enjoy a second winning career when pre-1972 classic racing took off in a big way at the end of the 1970s. Demand for machines saw a replica industry spring up and while Roger Titchmarsh Racing was given official blessing to build frames, Seeley expressed annoyance at some unauthorised carbon copies.

Active on the classic scene in recent years, Colin rode a Seeley G50 at the 2001 Goodwood Revival and, smartly dressed as ever, was a busy member of the Bonhams team at motorcycle auctions. Never pompous, Colin had a ready wit and cheerful demeanour, but he was a perfectionist who could be exacting and strong-willed when he wanted things done his way. He will be greatly missed. •

ABOVE: Paul Smart at Ontario in 1971 on a Seeley-framed Kawasaki H1 750 triple

Colin Seeley's substantial history-packed and well illustrated books of 2006 and 2008 are more than mere autobiographies. Published by Redline Books, they are out of print but new copies can be found online



THE WAY WE WERE



The Young Ones

In this Way We Were special, *CB* reader Allan Cole recounts his teenage years as a café racer cowboy – and the social changes that made them possible

WE DIDN'T KNOW we were 'baby boomers'. Back then, no one used the term that came to describe those of us born after the end of World War II in 1945. Growing up in the countryside, we had the freedom to wander and explore – first on foot, then by bicycle and eventually by motorcycle. The 'family car' was a new concept and

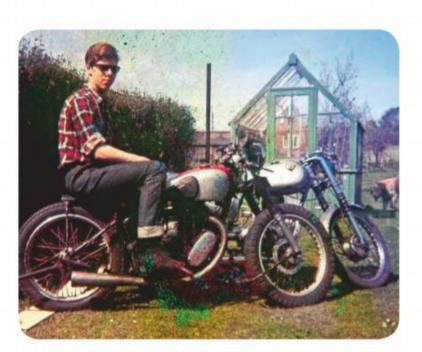
as hire purchase agreements made it possible to live more luxuriously, dads and uncles across the nation were abandoning their faithful motorcycles for the warmer, drier four-wheeled option.

Teenage boomers saw things differently. Excitement was our option – and the income from a newspaper round or a few hours' serving petrol each week could open the door to the world of motorcycling and change your life forever! That led to me battering a couple of mopeds, then a rigidframed AJS, around as field bikes... until they eventually succumbed to my lack of maintenance and mechanical ignorance.

The next step for me was my first

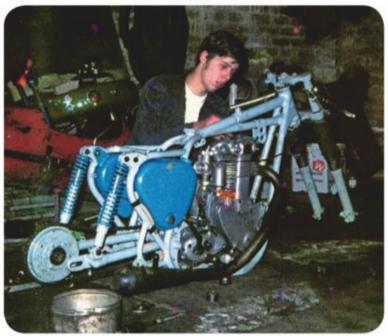
Riding on the memories of Classic Bike readers







CLOCKWISE FROM
TOP LEFT: 17-yearold Allan posing on
his AJS field bike.
His first road bike,
a 250cc BSA C11.
Allan's first big
bike, an Ariel
Huntmaster, later to
be café racer-ised.
Building his budget
Gold Star with a
scrambler engine





EXCITEMENT WAS OUR OPTION. THE INCOME FROM A NEWSPAPER ROUND COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOREVER!

road bike, a 250cc BSA C11 – and with it came new-found freedom, as it did for many of the youth of the '60s, ripping up the country lanes of post-war England. Sadly, my personal love affair ended suddenly, when the little Beeza (and my right leg) were smashed against the front of an Austin A55 doing a right turn.

Soon the leg was back in one piece, initiating a move up to a bigger, faster bike. When a neighbour decided to join the trend to car ownership, hang up his 'storm coat' and buy a car instead of his 650cc Huntmaster, I thought the old Ariel would be a match made in heaven for me. But it turned out to be a sensible bike with a quiet, siamesed exhaust, air filter, big mudguards, the lot! Of course, that

had to change, so before too long I had turned it into a café racer.

As the Ariel was 'first cousin' to a BSA A10, any customising bits for Beezas would look good on it, and in this way the transformation of the Ariel progressed, step by step. An apprentice's budget didn't allow anything OTT, but clip-ons, rearsets, a glassfibre tank and sweptback exhausts with Dunstall long megas gave the look (if not the performance) of the iconic café racer. My favourite was always those curvy swept-back pipes. They looked like they had been blown back into that shape by doing the ton – and never mind that if you dropped the bike, they were gone because they were the most vulnerable part of it!

Life in mid-'60s England was pretty grim. World War II was still a vivid memory for most adults, and although there was a growing faith in a better future, repair and recovery was society's theme. But that was not so for the young bunch who had been conceived during the wave of euphoria that had swept the nation in the late '40s.

The war had ended, the Brits had persevered and won – and when the young servicemen returned home, the young women dropped their collective guards (and other things). Of course, that resulted in a tidal wave of babies. By the '60s, that tidal wave was out of school and collecting wages. For a few years, we were the 16 to 19-year-olds – somebody had invented the



THE WAY WE WERE

RIGHT: Paul Liversidge, a style icon to Allan and his mates, on his Bonnie café racer

lan Mace, another our role model for Allan and his Mansfield mates. Check out the oh-so-low clip-ons!



teenager and we were, for the first time in history, in no hurry to be carbon copies of our parents.

We had grown up with comics and films that glorified the war heroes of Britain and America. John Wayne had won the war, and many of us were looking around for our own brand of hero. Rock stars filled that role in the dreams of many a teen, but some of us wanted the men we worshipped to inhabit a bit more of a dangerous world – we saved our adulation for the guys who risked their life on race tracks, from the local lads like John 'Moon Eyes' Cooper through to world champion

Mike 'The Bike' Hailwood.

Our heroes had open exhausts – and we wanted the same. Our heroes wore leather – and we did, too. Our heroes had rearsets - so did we. Of course, these fashion trends soon became caricatures and the bikes began to wear clip-ons so low that you could hardly see over the headlamp. One particularly memorable example (as seen in the photo above) was a Triumph belonging to Ian Mace, a mate who was a couple of years older than us and worked as a mechanic at Copes, a local bike shop in Mansfield. Wow! He had a Bonneville, he had a

steady girlfriend and he had a dream job. He was inspirational!

Another trendsetter and style icon was Paul Liversidge. Just look at the blue Triumph pictured above – he had all the gear, clip-on 'bars, swept-back exhausts, glassfibre tank and seat, and open reverse-cone megas. What a glorious sound – every gearchange and roar on the overrun could be heard as he rode home to the next town, over five miles away!

At first, as many of us were 16 or 17 years old, we couldn't go into pubs for a beer, so we rode out onto the newly-created ring roads and motorways, where transport cafés were conveniently sited for longdistance truck drivers. Here we could park up, swagger around, look menacing (ha-ha), make a noise, play the juke box and talk for hours, all for the price of a cuppa. My parents used to moan: "Why don't you go during the daytime?" and: "What are you lot up to – just drinking coffee?" The generation gap was setting in...

As an apprentice diesel mechanic with some knowledge and spannering skills, fixing the many discarded and unwanted Brit bikes of the '50s and '60s was fun. Between us, a nearby friend called Graham, my brother Dave and myself, we built some unusual specials. There were a couple of TriBSAs, a Velocette with glassfibre bodywork and twin (back to back) front brakes, some lowered and modified sidecars and a Gold Star hybrid using a Scrambler engine.

They were all what we now call café racers – and our greatest thrill was to goad a fast car or sports car into a duel. A big problem, however, was that Brit bikes were equipped with Lucas electrics. On the maker's badge 'Joseph Lucas Ltd', we all mentally added: 'Prince of Darkness'. It was always a 50/50







SPORTS CAR AT SPEED, THEN – BANG!

gamble when, returning home after being out, you switched on your lights. Would they work or would you be tailing a more fortunate mate whose lights still worked?

So a number of our bike projects had no lighting systems at all, especially a Super Rocket of mine that let go of its generator while I was riding it (I didn't stop to pick it up, as I saw the damage it had done to the front of the following car!) The solution to our lighting problem ABOVE: Off to Blackpool on the M1 with Graham (and beers)

Norton ES2 with impromptu passenger

BELOW: The White Cross club lined up in Blackpool

was to put bicycle lights on the front and back of our motorbikes. Imagine the thrill/terror as you finally sneaked past some sports car you'd be dicing with at high speed and then - bang! Darkness!

As dedicated café racers, we had to make our pilgrimages to the local race circuits: Cadwell Park, with its mini-mountain that saw many bikes doing wheelies over the crest; or wind-swept Darley Moor, which had been a WWII airfield in a

previous life; or the tight and twisty Mallory Park. Mallory was a spectator's track where our lads and lasses of the Mansfield White Cross club would spread out on the bank overlooking the main straight. As the old Brit singles would come past on full throttle, the sound bounced off the advertising hoardings that lined the track with a strange 'zinging' echo. Almost half of the track consists of Gerrard's – and to watch such equally matched 500cc singles, tightly bunched and banked over to the limit round that long, sweeping bend was exciting stuff.

Wandering around the pits or even the parking area was aweinspiring – and it was while inspecting the show in the bike parking at Mallory one day that I saw my first Beemer. Yes, it was an old man's style of bike. Yes, it was foreign. But it was so smart and purposeful. It stood out like the proverbial 'dog's bollocks.

Surrounded by British bikes of various dark muted colours, it shone like a ray of sunshine – brilliant white from front to rear, with huge mudguards and a massive lump of a petrol tank. Many years later, I found out that it was a BMW R69S, but that unique and stunning vision stayed with me – and years later, when I moved to South Africa, I would realise what it was like to experience riding that vision. But that's another story. (*To be continued...*)





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Exhibiting good taste

CB reader Maurice Parker suggests a collection worth a stopover in central France



YOUR RECENT SERIES on motorcycle collections put me in mind of a small museum I happened across whilst touring France a couple of years ago. The small but beautifully arranged museum dedicated to Monet et Goyon in Melle, near Niort in central France is well worth a visit.

TIT IS A SMALL BUT BEAUTIFULLY ARRANGED MUSEUM'

It is tucked away and appears to be little more than a shop front, but the wealth of interesting exhibits is truly stunning – all in superb order and watched over by an extremely knowledgeable lady who is obviously passionate about the marque. Monet et Goyon were a major player among French manufacturers from 1917 until they ceased trading in 1959, and had links with Villiers in the UK who supplied many of the engines for their two-stroke models. If you are ever in the region, take a look, you won't be disappointed.

Maurice Parker

RIP COLIN SEELEY

The news that Colin Seeley has passed away is very sad. His place in motorcycle history is assured and his technical development within the sport was immense. I still remember the sight and sound of the URS solo and outfit howling around Brands Hatch. Ironically, I recently rediscovered this picture in an old, forgotten album, showing both bikes being worked on in the pits that day.

Michael Gardner





took it back in part-ex for a secondhand Suzuki 750 Kettle -1 did 20,000 miles in 18 months around London on that without a single glitch. So no nostalgia for that Norton. None. Woof! **Mark Brett, London**

MORE WARPING PLEASE

Loved the article in January's issue 'Inside timewarp Norton and Ducati factories'. It got me thinking that a similar kind of illustrated article comparing 'now and then' production of, say, the Triumph Bonneville would make interesting reading. Also liked and related to Gary Pinchin's Our Classics feature 'Tiger on the Prowl' in the December issue; it's a quandary I can relate to – but unfortunately for me, I sold the bike!

Gavin Hodges, Chertsey, Surrey

CRIMINAL ENGINEERING

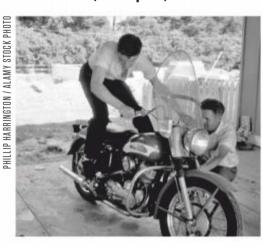
The feature on the Ducati and Norton factories in your January issue showed photos of Norton Interpols awaiting delivery. If only they had never left the depot! In a moment of madness in 1977, I bought a secondhand one from Myers Motors in South London to use for messengering. OK, it parted the traffic, as the two-tone horns were still in place! But out of 30-plus bikes I have owned, it was by far the most unreliable, antiquated gearbox-case-breaking oily old dog. It made my Panther look modern. I would spend four days a week working and three fixing it. Couldn't earn a living on it, but I got really fit pushing it. I reckon road crime went up by a third when the police had theirs all parked up. Luckily Myers



HOSPITAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In your 'King of the Road' article in the November issue, the author mentions that Elvis once lived on Getwell Road and that 'if there isn't a hospital on that road, they should build one'. Actually, they did! The Kennedy Hospital opened in 1943 and treated thousands of US combat veterans and even had German POWs. Elvis took his Army pre-induction physical there as well. Oddly enough, the road was originally named Shotwell — but that wasn't considered an appropriate address for wounded soldiers, so the street name was changed to Getwell.

Jack Brown, Memphis, Tennessee





PLANE FOR ALL TO SEE

The interviews in *Classic Bike* of retired significant figures in the motorcycle world seem to be an excellent initiative! However, before one statement in 'At lunch with Chas Mortimer' (February issue) slides into becoming 'fact', I might mention that neither Chas's grandfather, nor anyone else, flew a Spitfire in 1932. The maiden flight of this aviation icon occurred on March 5, 1936, with the plane flown by Joseph 'Mutt' Summers, the Chief Test Pilot for Vickers Supermarine.

Nigel Stennett-Cox, North Walsham

Oops – we double-checked all Chas's racing facts, but neglected to check this aviation fact. Hope it didn't affect your enjoyment of the rest of the interview. Chocks away, Mark H

A10 MEMORIES (SLIGHT REPRISE)

Quite why your article on Adrian Baker's A10 (November issue) upset Ken Stephen (Letters, January issue) so, I cannot understand. This A10 is one man's bike and the work he has done on it over several decades to achieve his 'ideal'. It's not an oily-rag job, it is ridden quite hard and is a very practical machine – and for Adey Baker it's his perfect A10, till the next mod comes along. I know all this, as I sold Adey the bike initially and am a very good friend. Whether the forks sit too high is irrelevant. The suspension is much better and the brakes far superior to many other A10s and it's a great bike to ride. It is chucked around the roads with great enthusiasm and, lastly, it is a 'classic bike'.

Martin Wardle





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The Little of the Days

The destiny of the classic world is in the hands of youthful enthusiasts like Ewan Burgess – a young man whose zeal for old machines led to a dream job working on British bikes



WORDS: GARY PINCHIN PHOTOGRAPHY: GARY MARGERUM







CLASSIC YOUTH

BSA





TOP: Ewan managed to buy his plunger-framed 1950
A7 BSA on the cheap and modified it himself
ABOVE (CENTRE): Ewan working on cylinder head
ABOVE: The 1972 Husqvarna motocrosser that
he plans to race this year in the Pre-74 class

Y've always been into working on old vehicles. My first car was an Austin A35'

wan Burgess looks like he might have been born in the wrong decade. Standing there tinkering with an old Triumph, the 21 year-old mechanic is dressed in an old, fraying waxed jacket with sewn-on BSA patches. There's the ubiquitous flat cap, jeans with turn-ups and desert boots that were de riguer in the 1950s and '60s...

But this is not some kind of 'hipster' fashion, donned for a photo shoot. This is Ewan's everyday style, something that developed from his early teenage years. "I've always been into working on old vehicles," he says. "At college I studied agricultural engineering, so I was working on farm machinery. My step dad had a BSA 441 Victor GP 'crosser which he built. He also had a Greeves scrambler. I was seven when my step dad came into my life, so he's had quite an influence on me. He's also into old cars and had a Sunbeam Alpine. My first car was an Austin A35. I just love old stuff."

For his one-day-a-week placement while at college, Ewan secured work at CCK Historic in Uckfield, East Sussex, a highly respected company that specialises in complete restoration of classic cars and preparation of historic racing cars. "As they deal in classic racing cars, they'll go to the an even like the Goodwood Revival with five cars," explains Ewan. "I was doing prep work there and my first job was to take the engine out of a Nash Metropolitan. I worked on A40s, Minis, etc. Their workshop is unbelievable and I learned so much."

Despite that, Ewan reckons his plan was always to work in the agricultural industry. "That was my aim, but through CCK I went to Goodwood and, just by chance, I met Cliff and Kev [Cliff Rushworth and his son Kevin, who own London-based pre-unit Triumph bike specialists Ace Classics]. I saw their sign-written Chevy pick-up, which was used as the official vehicle for the Revival motorcycle races – and I realised their shop was literally just around the corner from where I lived. So I walked up to them and asked them if they had a job!"

Initially, they said they didn't have anything. They already had a guy called Alan who did all their engine builds and servicing – and would probably struggle to find the time to nurture a youngster. But after giving it some thought, Cliff contacted him to offer some part time work.

Cliff says: "You could tell the lad had a passion for working on classics cars and bikes. He was just 18 when he first came here – and turned up in an Austin A35, which he'd bought at the age of 14. He'd done an engine job and dropped the suspension. Anyway, although we didn't have anything going at the time, I did have a few one-off jobs that needed sorting. I offered him one-day-a-week for a while, just to see how things worked out. His first job was assembling 200 sets of forks, and he fitted right in."

From there, one-off jobs followed one-off jobs... to the point where Cliff and Kev realised that Ewan had the ability to learn fast and could become a real asset to the firm. "After I'd done the forks, Cliff found me something else to do," says Ewan. "When that was done, there was something else, to the point where it escalated into a full-time job – my first job after leaving college. It's what I want to do. I still get to work on agricultural stuff; my dad works on a golf course and gets me there to fix their grass-cutting machines!"

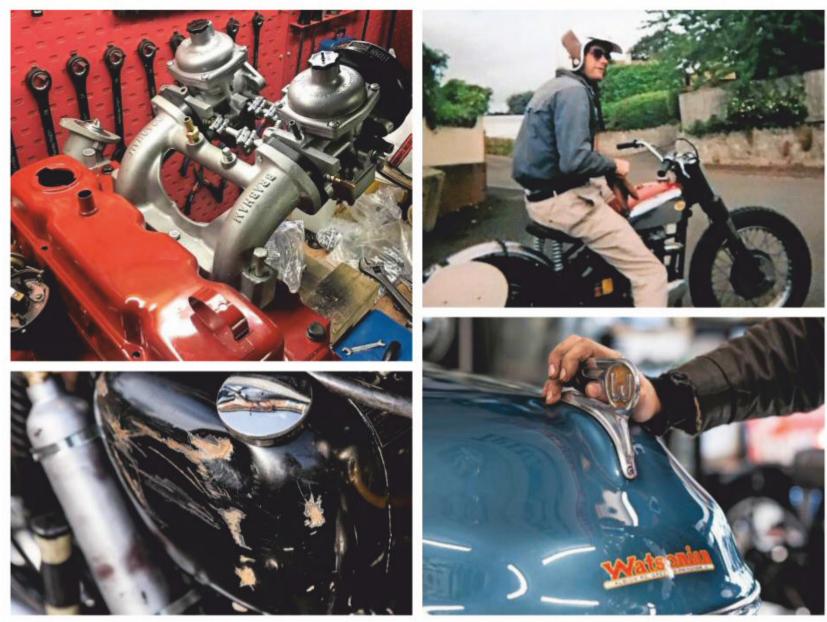
Ewan rides a decidedly non-standard 1950 plunger-framed BSA A7. "It came up for sale, owned by a bloke called Martin Roberts who let me have it cheap. I was inspired by the desert sled Triumphs we do here at Ace – I wanted to build the BSA into something like one of the bikes they would have raced in American desert races in the 1950s and '60s.

"It's got a small export tank, original Bates seat and high-level pipes which I had made by Campbell Exhausts. I geared it for more acceleration, and it's got twin carbs — one with the float bowl chopped off. Then I made the double airbox that runs around both carbs and fitted twin air filters. It's also got a fork brace and high bars.

"The engine has been totally rebuilt with a new crank and pistons. Newmans made me a cam for it. It's an early long-stroke A7, which







ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Ewan's love of classics extends to his car – this is the engine from his Vauxhall Viva Brabham. Off for a ride on his BSA.

Detail of the Watsonian sidecar Ewan restored. Creating details like this authentic-looking dent in a replica of Bud Ekins' TR6SS is all in a day's work





You're better off having old stuff in London - no MoT, no tax, cheap insurance'

has different crankcases to the later models, so they made a new cam with an A10, short-stroke profile which makes it breathe a little better. It's only a 500 and quite heavy, so the performance gains are minimal, but I love riding it."

Ewan has decided he wants to race, but building a desert sled Triumph is probably out of the question on two counts: first he needs riding experience, and second, he couldn't afford one right now.

"So I've just bought a 1972 Husqvarna 'crosser," he says. "I plan to race it next year in the Pre-74 class at the Mortimer club events and at the Canada Heights Hare and Hounds – I'm really looking forward to that one. The track is one-third scrambles course, one-third woods and one-third meadow. That should get me honing my off-road skills. I originally learned to ride a bike off road – my step dad bought me a little 50cc thing and I rode that on dirt tracks. But there's a lot to learn from racing the Husky."

On the car front, he has a Vauxhall Viva. It's no ordinary Viva, though – it's one of the Jack Brabham-endorsed models. Off the production line it came with a mildly-tuned version of the original Viva 1159cc engine with twin Stromberg carbs, reworked exhaust manifolds and an uprated camshaft. "It's a 1968 model," he says. "You know BMC did a Mini special – a kind of kitted-up version of the standard car – and used John Cooper's name to sell it. Vauxhall

did the same with the Viva and put Jack Brabham's name on it. I'm in the process of rebuilding it and have just paid £2500 just in engine bits. I don't do modern cars."

Ewan's passion for old stuff goes beyond classic bikes and cars – and he's not alone in his love for the old stuff. "I was always into rock 'n' roll," he says. "Lately I've got into the Woodstock stuff, but my friends are into rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll... 1950s/60s stuff. There's a load of us, some into cars, some into scooters, some into bikes, but unlike the mods and rockers era in the '60s, we're all one big group. I'd say there's somewhere between 15-20 of us.

"My cousin is a mod. That's how he dresses. He's got a Mini. There's quite a few young guys among us with old classics like Hillman Minxes, Humbers and Minis. My mate Hamish in Wales has a Vespa. Now he's got some kind of Russian two-stroke that he rides. Tom's got a Bantam and an A30 race car. Seven or eight of us went on a road trip last summer to the south coast – and everyone was either on or in an old vehicle. You're better off having old stuff in London, anyway – no MoT, no tax, cheap insurance."

Kev chuckles at the thought of him turning up for work in the Viva. "It's not something you see every day, is it – a young lad driving a classic car? Or riding a classic bike, for that matter. Ewan's really settled in here. Alan's worked with him and nurtured him, and Ewan can pretty much turn his hand to anything: top-end rebuilds, timing, fabrication, welding. Alan does our restoration work and Ewan does everything else – and we're one of the only classic bike shops now offering a full range of services, from buying and selling bikes, stocking a full range of Triumph spares, plus servicing and restoration. Ewan's an asset to our business. He's keen. He can do anything and we'd be lost without him. I love his enthusiasm and it's great to see him treat his bikes like I treat mine."

Ewan did all the work on the Bud Ekins-replica Triumph that Ace Classics has just finished building. It's based on the Trophy



that Ekins rode to a gold medal in the 1962 International Six Days Trial (ISDT). The original sold for a record-breaking £97,750 at auction – more than one regular Ace customer was prepared to bid.

Kev says: "Our French customer, Cedric, bid but didn't win it, so we said we'd build him an exact replica. We took photos of the Ekins original at the auction, then gave Ewan an unrestored 1962 Trophy TR6SS that we had and set Ewan the task of creating the replica. I'm really proud of the work he's done on it – I don't know anyone who could have done a better job."

Ewan, clearly embarrassed by the praise, sheepishly adds: "I loved working on the ISDT bike. I loved all the small details it needed. It was a bit of an out-of-the-ordinary job to get it just right."

Another quirky task he was given was restoring a Watsonian sidecar for a customer. Part of his work was to recreate the entire interior, with wooden panels covered in leatherette. "Yeah it's made



from real wood – or 'wood wood' as Kev likes to call it. The sidecar goes on a rigid 1953 that the owner has had in the family from new. The sidecar was fitted a couple of years after the bike was bought and we're restoring it."

Bearing in mind that Ewan already has his mildly-modified BSA, we wondered what he'd consider to be his dream bike. "I'd love a duplex-framed Triumph desert racer like the McQueen #955 that we built a replica of here... or maybe an Aztec and Ivory desert racer. But either would cost me a fortune to build – and I've just paid three grand for my Husqvarna! I've always wanted a Spitfire scrambler, too. I love desert sleds...

"But our house is all antiques. Old signs on the walls. I've got a box of old bike mags I research stuff from, but I'm also on a Facebook page called 'Racebook' that you have to apply to join. It's full of old desert race bikes and a lot of people connected with 1960s desert racing are on there, like Cliff Coleman and Bud Ekins' nephew Gene Smith, whose dad Buck was a famous desert racer."

With all this passion for old race bikes, especially British twins, it's little wonder that Ewan's such a good fit at Ace Classics. "It's brilliant working here," says. "The stuff I've learned from Alan is amazing. I'd learned how to weld, do fabrication and fix bodywork at college, but Alan's taken me on by miles. I've not done any Triumph bottom-end builds yet, but I have done my own BSA and Viva. And, from what I've learned, the BSA has a slightly more complex set-up than the Triumph. I do top-end work on the Triumphs all the time, though 'officially' I do servicing and repairs – and some fabrication work liking shaping and welding bash plates for the ISDT Triumphs – while Alan focuses on engine building.

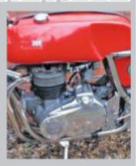
"I love the work and there's so many opportunities to do things connected with the business, too. Kev goes racing in France and Goodwood with the 500 Triumphs, for example. And there's those replica we create, which are fun to do. I can picture myself doing this forever. Ask anyone in my family and they'll say the same about me. I really can't imagine doing anything else."



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BUTTERWORTH BROTHERS



ABOVE: From left to right: grandad Harold, Jack and Ben in the workshop of Raysons, who made the exhaust for Jack's bike

igh up overlooking Rochdale from an old quarry on the outskirts of the city, brothers Ben (27) and Jack Butterworth (25) are giving me a glimpse of their impressive capabilities and talents onboard their Ariel trials irons. They're accompanied on the sidelines by their grandad, Harold Isherwood (81), ready to tinker and tweak if need be. Ben kicked his over straight out of the van, immediately ready to roll; Jack's took a little fettling – but grandad was in there straight away, adjusting the new carburettor. He soon had the Ariel thumping away tunefully and the brothers headed off into the depths of the quarry.

Earlier in the day, after grabbing a much needed bacon butty and mug of tea at Harold's house, I'd been led through the garage as the trials bikes were loaded into the van. It's spotless – I could eat my bacon roll off the garage floor, nothing's out of place or untidy. A gorgeous BSA B50 Cheney Aberg 580cc motocross bike leans against a wall; I immediately recognise it as a bike I've seen Ben compete on at the Red Marley hillclimb,

covered in mud and thrashed to within an inch of its life up the hill. It now sits looking immaculate, its chrome tank gleaming in the light. There's a real sense of pride in these bikes, the finish is meticulous.

Although Jack and Ben have been well acquainted with modern trials in the past, the appeal of riding pre-65 machines has become so strong that the most modern bikes they swing their legs over these days are pair of twinshock Fantics they've recently invested in. So what is it about riding old bikes that makes them shun modern trials, what keeps them going back for more?

"It's just everything about them, the characteristics... but it's the noise that really makes it for me," says Ben. Jack agrees: "It's just more enjoyable being on an older bike – the sound of 'em and the way they look, they're just so much better than modern bikes. It's a massive difference – it's just more fun. You get comments like: 'Bloody hell, how the hell do you ride that!?' and it just gives you an enthusiasm to do it."

At first the brothers came across a few, shall we say, 'disgruntled' veterans of the pre-65 scene who were

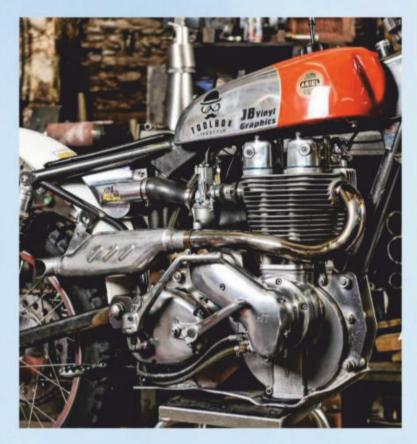
RIGHT: Jack gets the front wheel up on his Ariel in a quarry near Rochdale

FAR RIGHT: Jack's bike is a 1958 Ariel HT500, bought as a rolling wreck. Grandad Harold worked his magic to get it to this state



miffed that these two youngsters were soon dominating a lot of the competitions. "The older blokes didn't like it at first; they'd pull a face when we'd turn up," explains Ben. "But they all seem to have warmed to us, after I said to them: 'What happens when you can't ride any more? The sport stops and there's no need for it to stop.'

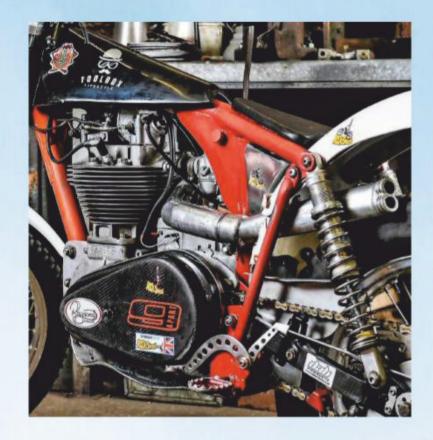
Thankfully the brothers are now a little more welcome in the scene and hopefully their exploits will encourage more lads and girls in their teens and twenties to follow suit. Ben adds that they don't limit their Ariels to classic competition: "I've gone and done modern trials on my bike, got some good results on it. They must pull a face when they've got a brand new 2019 Gas Gas and you're on a 1958 Ariel and you beat 'em!"



Without having to ask the Butterworths, I can tell the lads hold their grandad in high esteem; he clearly has a strong influence on them. In their youth, Harold noticed that the lads would be mesmerised by the sight of him working away on his bikes "They would stand there watching me for hours, just watching me. So eventually I said: 'I'll build you one'. That meant I had to build all my grandsons one – five of em!" Soon enough, and with his wife's permission, Harold had built five Yamaha TY80s in the spare front bedroom of their house.

The Butterworths' cousin Jake Isherwood also has plenty of riding talent, particularly in grasstrack and speedway. Oil and fuel appear to run through the Butterworth/Isherwood veins. Harold confirms:







FAR LEFT: Ben was the first of the Butterworth brothers to get an Ariel, but he had to wait to get his hands on this ` well-known HT5 competition bike

LEFT: Ben gets on stream with the Ariel. Both him and his brother are well versed in the ways of pre-65 trials competition

"They've all stuck with it, it was ingrained in 'em."

Isherwood himself first got into motorcycles after

Isherwood himself first got into motorcycles after leaving the army in the late '50s and bought his first Ariel from Jim Sandiford senior, a bike which trials legend Jim Sandiford junior had previously competed on. Although Harold never competed professionally and didn't have a lot of money to invest in the sport, he thoroughly enjoyed the life of a club rider. "In those days you had to ride to trials; only well-off people had a pick-up, so you were filthy when you came back and your tyres were flat, but it was a good life – it was brilliant!"

So when the boys started to express an interest in pre-65 trials and doing the Scottish Six Days, Harold

was well placed to tell them how to do it: "You wanna do that on an Ariel – they were monsters, they were dinosaurs!" Ben was first to get his Ariel, a HT5, though only after hounding then-owner Neil Gaunt, who'd previously ridden it to success at the Scottish pre-65.

"Everyone I knew said buy that bike," says Ben –and in 2013 he finally got his hands on it. "We had to change the exhaust on it, lower the suspension dramatically and then it was ready to ride. In full it's a short-stroke 500cc engine with a Burman gearbox housed in a replica HT5 frame, running REH Forks and Rockshock rear shock absorbers. Because grandad rode an Ariel back when he was younger, he always said he





wanted us to ride a pre-65 bike – and he always said: 'I'd love you to ride an Ariel'." Then, two years later, after scouring the internet, Jack and Harold came across a scruffy-looking 1958 HT500. They had to have it.

"We bought it as a rolling wreck from Wales and brought it back – it was all rusty. Then grandad worked his magic and made it all nice and polished. We had a new frame for it – more of a trick frame, but the engine and gearbox were all there – they're the hardest parts to find. All the Rockshocks and everything are off the shelf, made to suit your bike and bodyweight. The forks are special REH trials forks. It took about two years; I think it was completed in 2017. It took a while to get it done, but he [he points to his grandad] was in the garage every day doing it." It's also worth mentioning that

Raysons Exhausts of Rochdale built Jack's exhaust, with Ben Hardman providing a top service in the workshop.

Jack and Ben happily spend the rest of morning bouncing the Ariels from rock to rock in the quarry, providing plenty of photo opportunities, meeting every suggestion I have with an unquestioning nod of the head and twist of the wrist. The bikes work perfectly, the only mechanical slip-up occurring when Jack, jumping into the air on his brother's bike, suddenly finds the yoke has let loose, leaving Jack to steer thin air with the bars. The initial response is hilarity, although they soon have the yoke back in place ready to do some wheelies. The machines run perfectly and sound fantastic, testament to Harold's skills as a mechanic.

At one point during our visit, Harold grabs the O

BUTTERWORTH BROTHERS

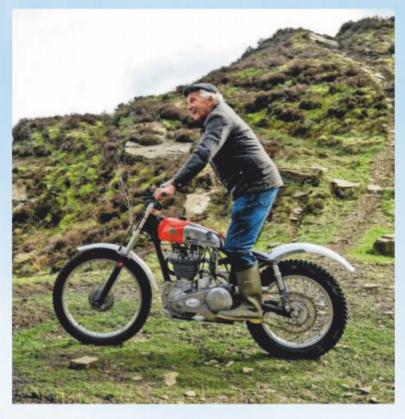
RIGHT: He spends most of his time cleaning and working on his grandsons' bikes these days, but Harold enjoys the odd nostalgic blast on one of the Ariels

BELOW: Ben and Jack are a couple of young brothers who have broken into the brotherhood of pre-65 trials – and very successfully, too chance to have a quick go on Jack's Ariel – and clearly relishes the opportunity. He looks smooth and right at home, with his grandsons quick to point out the best lines as he weaves a trail over loose stone and slate.

Having broken his back in two places eight years ago while riding his BSA, Harold has taken more of a back seat when it comes to riding – except for special occasions, of course. He's now much more happy to spend his time working on his bikes, keeping them in perfect working order for his two grandsons. In fact he doesn't even expect Jack to bring his back washed after competitions: "I tend to find that young 'uns, when they bring bikes in and they're all filthy, they just blast 'em with water, so there's water getting in everywhere! I always say: 'Just leave it, bring it back, I'll do it!'" Ben and Jack have clearly got a sweet deal going on here!

Harold beams with pride when talking about the lads. It's a win-win situation – he gets to work on bikes he's dreamed of owning and at the same time gets to see his grandsons putting them through their paces, often beating the competition.

As the day winds down we slowly make our way out of the quarry, with Ben and Jack dropping off rocks on their way, throwing in the odd flick turn and wheelie, always happy to keep going. "Shall me and Jack ride up that steep stream for a good photo?" "Er, yeah alright!" I respond. Ben and Jack's enthusiasm for riding is limitless. But why wouldn't it be? It's in their blood.



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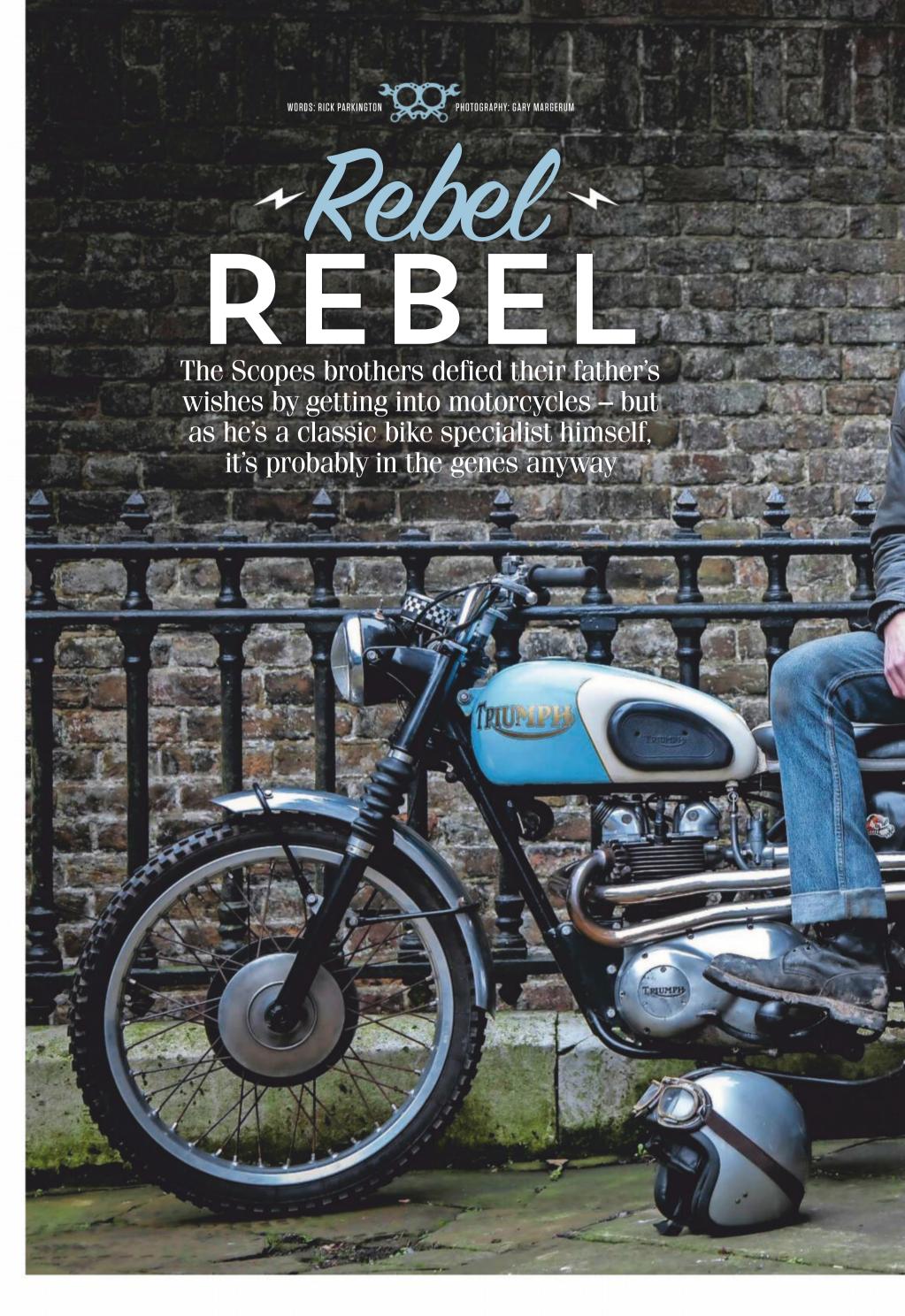




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Dad bought them a Ranger – but didn't push them into bikes

Y needed to strip the front end on my first Triumph. Dad went off for a ride - left me to it'

didn't really want them riding bikes," says Pete Scopes, standing in the middle of his sons' British bike collection.
"I didn't encourage them at all – I mean, there's so many cars driven by idiots now; it's too dangerous... but it didn't do any good."

Looking at the Scopes boys' collection, it strikes me that maybe this is reverse psychology. Kids are contrary – tell them not to do something and what do they do? What Pete's efforts not to encourage his sons has done is to produce two boys who have a core passion for British motorcycles – and particularly the products of the Triumph Engineering Company. But it doesn't end there, because they also have an 'old-fashioned' way about them: polite, respectful and hardworking; in fact all the things older people say you don't find in the younger generation these days...

Pete runs 'BritSteel Classics' in Dover, so the boys have always been exposed to the bellow of pushrod parallel twins and occasional childhood rides, sat on the petrol tank. Pete does admit to having taken the boys to classic races and bought them an elderly 50cc BSA Ranger kid's bike when they were just five and seven (see above), but it's very clear they were not spoiled.

"When they came with me to the workshop, I'd dig out my carbs box and give them each an Amal carburettor to strip, clean and reassemble – and after they'd finished, I'd check they'd done it right. They were scratching round looking for things to do and I felt they should do something constructive – learn a skill, maybe they could become Amal tuning experts...

"Besides, it kept them occupied. I remember walking into the workshop one day to find Vince busy polishing my Bonnie tank; it was a nice thought—I'd done the paint myself and was really pleased with it. Only trouble was, he was using wire wool and my lovely paint job as now all white dust! Fortunately he hadn't gone through the lacquer and I managed to save it. Then, another time, I'd left my sprint Triumph in the kitchen and I came downstairs to find he'd decided to explore by poking his arm up inside the megaphone. His hands were black, so were his pyjamas, with black handprints on the walls and cupboards and the table legs. I couldn't believe it!"

So maybe bikes were already rooted in the boys' genes – but even so, trying to teach kids how to do a job is always a difficult task. Their attention span is brief when they're watching somebody •



else, and Pete seems to have seems to have adopted a perfect approach, creating a sort of accidental cultivation as the boys grew up.

"Mind you, "grins Vince, "He was awful with our Airfix models..."

"Yes," chips in Lewis, "You used to come in and say: 'I'll show you how to do that bit,' and before we knew it you'd finished the whole model! But on the other hand, I remember when I needed to strip the front end on my first Triumph, dad just got out his bike and went off for a ride, leaving me to figure out how to get the forks apart on my own! Of course, I didn't have a clue what I was doing – but I found a manual on the shelf, looked it up and had them safely all dismantled by the time he came back." Vince adds: "The thing is, we always knew we had back-up; if we got stuck with anything we knew dad was available to help. But he thought it was better to

leave us to learn for ourselves – and that, really, is the best way."

So where are we now? Well, older brother Vince (aged 27) has the 500 Triumph he's riding in the photos and a project 1968 Bonneville he bought about 18 months ago; "Don't get me wrong," he says, "I've had to work up to that. I started about seven years ago, I bought back a 350cc BSA B40 that dad had built and sold originally. What I really wanted was a Triumph - but I couldn't afford one. Then I saw one advertised in Motorcycle News, down in Hampshire for £900. It was only a 3TA, but after looking for ages online, at local shows, Kempton Park autojumble and the rest, it was the only affordable Triumph twin I'd seen. I rang the number; the lady selling said she used to ride it regularly, but a horse riding injury had put her off the road. I just told her: 'I'll have it!' – I was lucky, MCN isn't the obvious place to look for classic bikes, so nobody else had spotted it.

"I started helping out at Road Star Cycles in Dover in exchange for the parts I needed to convert the 3TA into a 500 and make it how I wanted it. One of the inspirations was a photo we found online of a 500 that we both really liked – it had a proper original '60s look to it; funnily enough it turned out to be your old bike, Rick!"

Vince continued: "I built my 500 as a café racer first, but it was my only transport and it seemed a bit silly riding a café racer to work every day—especially through the winter—so I decided to go for the scrambler style instead. In the course of building it, I ended up with enough left over to put together another bike, so I built that up and sold it, spending the money on an A10 café racer. Although that was complete, there

was a lot more wrong with it than I expected – but then I had a bit of luck, I found a genuine Gold Star frame lying in a garden...

"I'd got a lift with some mates to see a bloke who was selling a load of stuff. He said: "What? That A10 frame? Hundred and fifty quid." I gave him the money and started scraping off the rust over the frame number to see what it was off. The number started 'CB32...'! 'Oh ****!' he said – he'd never thought to look at what it was! I bought a B31 engine and started piecing together bits to build a Goldie replica. But then I met someone who wanted to do a deal on the A10 and the Goldie bits for his '68 Bonnie project – and that was what I really wanted all along."

I know that route to getting the bike you want. This kind of

wheeling and dealing is exactly how I got my bikes, too – it's a ladder that all those of us with tastes beyond our budget have to climb. Building projects and selling them to pay for more valuable projects works – and you learn a lot along the way. The only thing is, it takes time – so it pays to start young.

But it's not the only way to crack the nut. Lewis, who's now 24, started slightly younger than his brother and has adopted a different (yet equally familiar to me) approach. He bought his bikes by saving up and spending nearly every penny he earns on them – even to the extent of living in the attic of his workshop for a couple of years to cut his cost of living and be able to spend as much as possible of his free time building his bikes. "We used to worry about him and send him texts in the winter to make sure he was OK," says Pete. "He

wasn't really interested in going out or anything young people usually do; he was just obsessed with his bikes. He's a bit more of a tear-arse than Vince and has turned into a bit of a tuning freak. He's actually got pretty good at it and I'm proud of the knowledge they've built up between them – a lot of it they worked out for themselves. Of course, they're typical brothers – always nicking bits off each other! When Vince turned his café racer into a scrambler, he soon found half the bits on Lew's bike!"

Lewis has another B40 in trials style, also originally built and sold by Pete and then bought back again. "I've still got that one. My first 500 Triumph was a bike that dad bought—it was complete and running, but it was a bit of a rat bike really." Lew recalls, "I bought it off him and rebuilt it from bits and pieces to make it into a café racer. After getting that on the road, I found another one—a 350 anyway—for £2500. It wasn't a bad price, because the wheels had already been rebuilt onto alloy rims so that saved me about £400.

"Same as Vince, I converted it to 500cc, and again since it was my everyday transport and I already had the café racer, I built it up as a scrambler style so I had the choice. Since then I've picked up a 1979 T140 project. I think the oil-in-frame bikes are underrated; they have a good chassis and a strong motor that's easy to tune. The worst thing is they're a bit ugly as standard – those big cigar silencers were the first thing to go! I'm planning to build it up in '60s style – a bit like dad's oil-in-frame T120."

So what do the brothers think is the particular appeal of the 500cc Triumph? "I just think they're great bikes," says Vince. "And they make a very good Triumph to start on, because they're

cheaper than a 650 but have good performance, so you don't feel you're starting out on something boring."

"They're pretty easy to work on as well," says Lewis. "You can get parts easily – although we do get fed up with the poor fit of a lot of bits – we've had small ends, shells and primary chains that just ended up in the bin. It's not worth buying cheap stuff online."

Neither Lewis nor Vince have much interest in social media; they say most people their age are 'idiots' with whom they don't share anything in common. Walk through town on a Saturday night and no doubt that's borne out... but I wonder if things are beginning to change. I keep meeting young people who say the same thing – wouldn't it be great if classic bikes can bring them all together? •

SCOPE FOR IMPROVEMENT

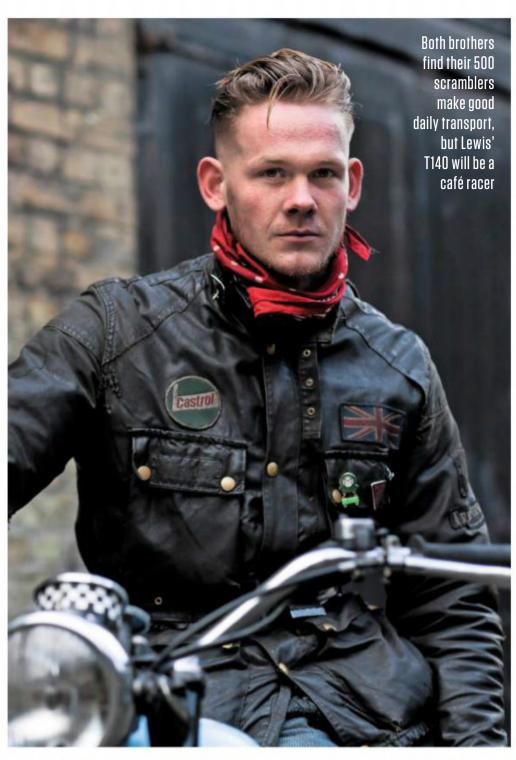
With Pete's help and advice, Vince and Lewis have developed their own views on how to make the best of Triumph's unit-construction C range.

The 350cc engines have been converted to 500cc using the larger head, barrel and pistons and Daytona conrods. Neither crank has been rebalanced for the larger pistons but, surprisingly, both are still smooth.

Ignition has been converted from points and distributor to timing cover-mounted electronic ignition using a later cover. This also requires changing the exhaust cam for one with a taper for an auto advance unit, and the cams fitted are Daytona race cams with R profile followers.

Vince's engine has 9:1 compression pistons, Lewis' 7:1 – but they report little difference at usual speeds, with Vince maybe having the edge at high revs. Both run open exhausts and, interestingly, Lewis' bike is louder. Gearing can be raised with a 19-tooth gearbox sprocket, but extracting extra power can lead to clutch slip. The boys recommend Surflex clutch plates and upgrading to a Bonneville-type clutch basket (which accommodates an extra pair of plates) and the three-spring shock-absorber centre to go with it, using Bonneville springs.

















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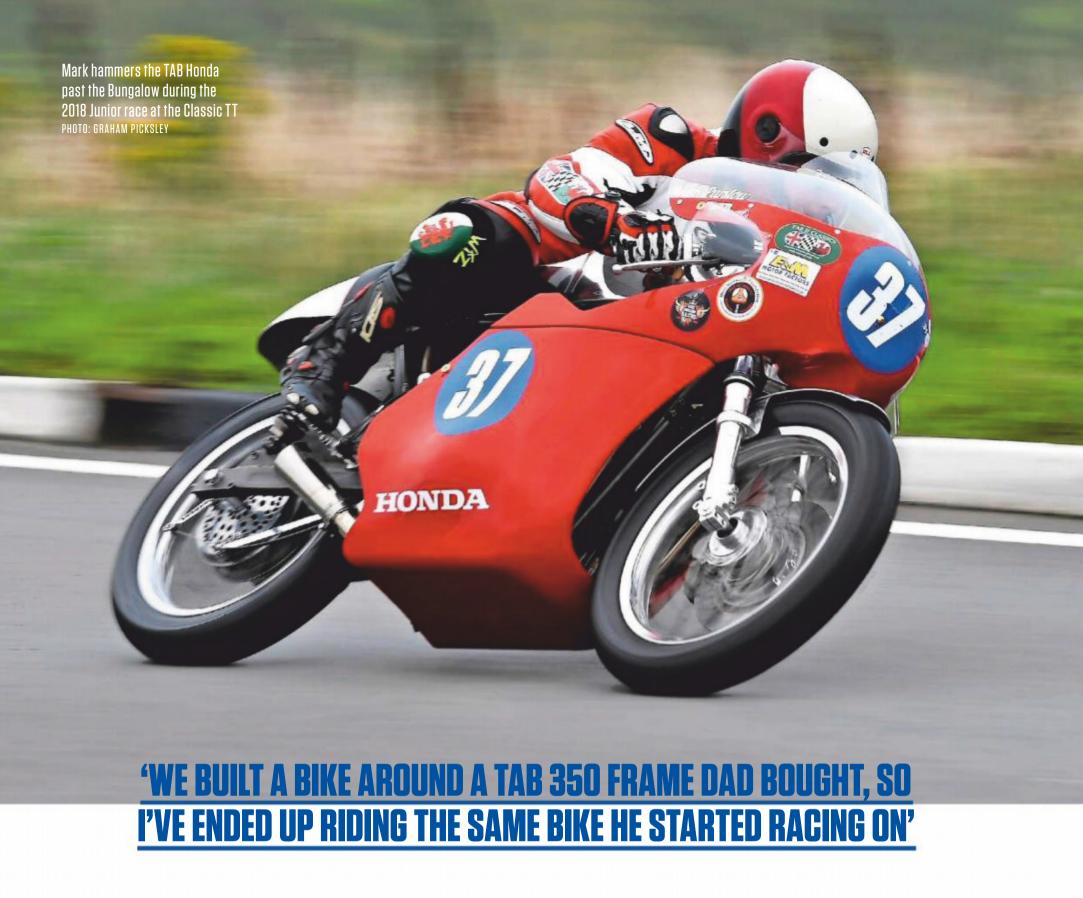
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o you believe in coincidence? There's a strong thread of it running through Mark Purslow's progression from hotel bar manager to artisan alloy welder – and extremely rapid racer (of the classic and modern varieties). If it hadn't been for the vagaries of chance, I might not be standing in Mark's spacious workshop. And 27-year-old Mark, from mid-Wales, might not be so passionate about racing a bike that's considerably older than he is. How did all that happen?

"I suppose when dad got into racing, I was always going to want to follow him," Mark admits. "But how it all happened is strange. Dad had been rallying before he raced bikes. I think he thought bikes might be a bit cheaper. He got into classics because those were the bikes he knew – and he started competing on a Honda K4 because they were an affordable and competitive mount for the 350 class. At that time, he didn't even know who Terry Baker was and his race bike still had its standard Honda frame."

But, as Mark's dad Colin got more competitive, he soon realised the shortcomings of the chassis. "I've never raced a stock-framed K4," Mark explains. "But everyone who has, reckons they flex a bit. Once you've picked a cornering line, you're committed. Anyway, one evening dad called into the local pub with his mate after a pretty unsuccessful day's racing. Dad was talking about his bike's handling problems and it turned out the only other person in the bar was Terry Baker [renowned racer and TAB frame maker, see p58]. Terry overheard the conversation, came over and introduced himself, and before dad knew it he'd offered to build a frame for the K4."

Terry had stopped building frames by then, but he was fired up to help his new friend – and Colin would stop by and help work on the project after work. With the TAB frame, his fortunes on track picked up and he enjoyed several competitive seasons on the bike

before selling it to a guy in Scotland in about 2003. By then, he'd got into the Ducati singles he still races today and the demands of work and building a new family home were starting to impinge on racing.

"I remember dad racing when I was really young," Mark recalls. "Probably when I was only about four. Then he stopped for a while when he was building our house, but he started again when I was around eight. I loved going to races with him and I started racing myself when I was 15 on dad's Honda CBR400. That was a fairly old bike then and I've just got into older and older bikes since."

After taking a couple of years off when he was 19 and 20 ("girls, going out drinking – you know..."), 2013 was to become a significant year for Mark. "Dad rode in the Classic TT in 2013 and I went out to help him like I had done since 2010," he says. "The trouble was, my bosses at the hotel where I worked weren't keen on giving me the time off... but I quit the job and went anyway." Not only did that trip leave Mark without a job, it also left him with a burning desire to race in the Isle of Man himself.

"A little while after we got back, dad went to TAB for a couple of Ducati tanks and asked if they had any jobs going," says Mark. "Richard and Ailene (Terry's daughter), who had carried on the business after Terry died, were looking for someone to help out—and I was in the right place at the right time. Another slice of luck, I suppose. With the help of a grant from the Welsh Government, I started off by cutting out sheet metal panels to the patterns and learning to weld. I haven't looked back."

Mark hasn't looked back in his racing career since then, either. With enthusiastic and supportive employers behind him, he entered the Manx GP in 2015. On his dad's 'old' CBR400, Mark won the lightweight race at his first attempt. It was a stunning debut and one that was to pave the way for further visits to the Mountain Circuit •



ABOVE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): Fettling the Honda fairing; the frame for his CB500 in the original TAB jig, ready for tweaks to the steering head angle; Mark collects his Replica at the 2019 Classic TT, flanked by proud mum and dad Gwenda and Colin; the CB500 engine is being rebuilt for this season



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

- and an enduring enthusiasm for 'real' road racing. And the following year, another coincidence was about to tip him towards classic racing.

"Dad had gone up to Burgess Frames for something," Mark explains. "While he was there, he spotted a TAB CB350 frame and asked what they were doing with it. Tony Burgess said it was for sale and dad bought it on the spot. He bought it for old time's sake, really – but when he got it home, we decided to build a bike round it for me to race classics. That's how I've ended up riding the same bike that my dad started racing on. I rode it in the Classic TT that year, but fell off at the Gooseneck while I was lying eighth. I might have come off, but I've been really into the classics since then."

The following year (2017) Mark combined modern and classic racing. At the Classic TT, he was running well up the field when a footrest fell off coming into Ramsey. In 2018, he built a spare engine for the TAB Honda, but recorded another DNF in the Classic TT. But, never discouraged, Mark bought a classic CB500 racer – a rolling chassis and a stock engine – and started to build a competitive racer for the 500 class over the winter.

"I picked up a race engine for it," he recalls. "It was supposed to be race-ready, but when we got it fired up for the first time in January 2019 it smoked, had low compression and only just ran really. Dad and I rebuilt it ourselves. The Nikasil liners hadn't been fitted properly, the head gaskets wouldn't seal and it was missing a ring on one cylinder. It wasn't ready for the Pre-TT classic meeting, but I took it to the Classic TT. I finally got a finish in the Lightweight class (in 14th) on the CB350, but a coil bracket broke on the 500. I was unsure about the gearing I was running on the K4 in practice and changed it for the race. I got it wrong and was under-geared. Hopefully, I'll be back this year with both the bikes, hoping for two good finishes."

In between Classic TTs, Mark keeps his hand in with a few short circuit meetings – and as many road circuit races as he can – but he admits it's the roads that really interest him. "I ride at Aberdare Park, and Armoy [Northern Ireland]. I ride the short circuits to keep me sharp, but the roads are what I love. The road focuses your mind."

And it's the same with classic and modern bikes. Since he rode that first Classic TT on the CB350, Mark's been getting deeper and deeper into the classic scene. "When you're preparing a modern race bike, just about every part has to be the same as everybody else's to be competitive," he reckons. "With classics you can do your own thing more. They're more fun to ride, too. They have less power, so you have to carry more corner speed. They're harder to ride – but more rewarding. My 350 probably tops out around 130mph on Isle of Man gearing, so to get somewhere near a 100mph lap you have to maintain momentum and corner speed at all costs. I definitely prefer classics now. They have character and, over time, they grow on you. And the sound – there's no comparison."

As for riding on the road, though, Mark isn't quite so sure. "I did have a Kawasaki 600 for a while," he smiles. "But I ended up getting banned for two months. Then I built a café racer based on a Yamaha SR 500. I ride it occasionally, but I never seem to have the time. Dad and I try to do as much of our race prep and bike building ourselves. I get in from work, have a work-out (Mark has a home gym in a room off the workshop) and spend the rest of the evening in the workshop. At the weekends, I'm racing or back in the workshop. I don't mind, because I love working on the bikes, but it does mean I have no time for a social life – or even a girlfriend. And most of my cash goes on racing, too. We're having a couple of cams made by Newman Cams and that'll be about £1000. Racing just isn't cheap – though classics aren't as bad as modern bikes."

It must be worth it, though. Listening to Mark talk about racing in his beloved Isle of Man, I can see the passion in his eyes. He's a racer – and he's into his classics for the long haul. "I love it," he says simply. "I want to keep going for as long as my dad – it's his fault. I hope to still be racing in the Island when I'm his age. Why not?"

Why not indeed? Mark lives, works and breathes classic racing. He races what he loves on the circuits he loves. He's quick, talented and dedicated – a fine recipe for a memorable classic racing career. • Mark will be in action on his TAB Honda this season at: Mallory Park CRMC (May 9/10); Tonfanau, Gwynedd (May 24): Billown Circuit, Isle of Man Pre-TT meeting (May 29-June 1); Tonfanau, Gwynedd (July 5); Aberdare Park, Mid-Glamorgan (July 18/19); Armoy, Co Antrim (July 24/25); IoM Classic TT (Aug 22-31).

This is the bike that got Mark Purslow hooked on classic racing. It's essentially the same as the bike his dad, Colin, started his two-wheeled racing career on. Mark's campaigned the bike on short circuits as well as the unforgiving 'real' roads circuits of the Isle of Man and Armoy. This is what goes into producing a competitive Junior class Classic TT mount.

BODYWORK

Naturally, there's a shiny, alloy 24-litre tank from sponsors and employers TAB II Classics. The seat cowl is a TAB II part, too. The fairing came as part of a job lot of K4 racer parts that Mark's dad picked up along the way. Mark fabricated the oil catch tank.

FORKS

These are 35mm Ceriani replicas with modern internals. The yokes are a set Mark had lying around the workshop (he doesn't know the origins of them) and the clipons were bought from an Italian Ducati parts specialist at a show.



WHEELS Hubs are standard Honda with Akront rims.

BRAKESRear brake is the standard K4 Irum, while the front is a Honda

drum, while the front is a Honda disc with an AP racing caliper and a Suzuki GT500 master cylinder.







IGNITION

This component is due to be upgraded for this season. The current PVL set-up is making way for an Ignitech system.

CARBURETTORS

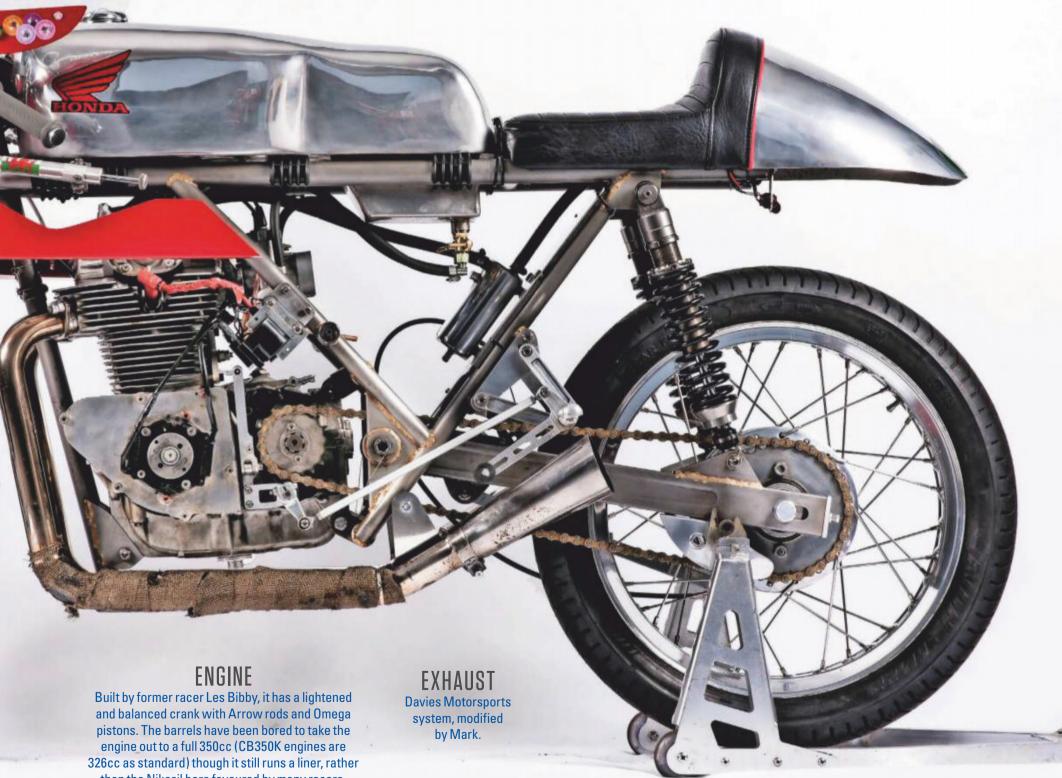
Mark has a pair of 31mm Keihin flat-slides to go on this season. At the moment, the bike is fitted with 31mm Mikunis.

FRAME AND SWINGARM

Bronze welded in T45 tubing and built on the original TAB jig by Burgess Frames, who acquired the rights to produce the frames from Terry Baker when he decided to concentrate on tank manufacture. Mark thinks it's the last TAB frame to be built by Burgess.

GEARBOX

Still the standard Honda 'box, but with two of the pinions changed to close up the gap between fourth and fifth. The parts were sourced from classic Honda racing specialists, Davies Motorsport (daviesmotorsport.com). First gear is higher than stock, too.



than the Nikasil bore favoured by many racers. The cam has been reprofiled to Les Bibby's own specification and the head is ported and fitted with Kibblewhite valves and valve springs.

SHOCKS

From CB350 race specialists Davies Motorsports. Fully adjustable for preload and damping.







KEEPING TABS

Mark Purslow's workplace is where the legacy of artisan tank builder Terry Baker is kept alive

WORDS: GEZ KANE PHOTOGRAPHY: STUART COLLINS

TERRY BAKER made quite a name for himself in classic bike circles – both as a manufacturer of high quality alloy fuel tanks for road and race bikes and as an innovative frame builder for Honda's popular classic racer, the CB350K4. When Terry passed away in 2010 after a short illness, it could have spelt the end for his company, TAB. Luckily, though, Terry's daughter Ailene and son-in-law Richard Phelps are made of pretty stern stuff. Having moved up from the Cotswolds to look after Terry, they decided to stay on and keep the name alive. With a lot of hard work – and the scaling of a very steep learning curve – TAB II Classics was born.

Terry started the business in Leytonstone back in 1972. By 1988, though, he'd had enough of the bustle of London and moved to rural mid-Wales. And that's where Ailene, Richard and their sole employee, Mark Purslow, practice their craft today. "We all had to learn new skills, Ailene explains. "Dad could do it all, but now we each have our speciality. I handle the forming work on the English Wheel, Mark is a brilliant alloy welder and Richard tackles the final finishing and polishing."

Every TAB II tank is hand crafted from start to finish. "We start with 1.5mm alloy sheet," says Richard. "We have hand-made formers for some of the basic shaping, then Ailene takes over on the English Wheel.

She used to help her dad when she was a girl, but she's put in a lot of hard work to master the art of metal forming.

"We gas weld everything. It means the welds are almost invisible even without grinding them down. We use welding rods made of the same material as the tanks and we crush the joints before smoothing them. It means we don't have to remove any metal from either side of the joint. That's important when most finished tanks are left in their polished finish, rather than being painted. That's what makes us different to most other tank manufacturers who TIG weld.

"Mark joined us by chance. His dad had just started classic racing and came in looking for a tank for his Ducati. He



Richard deals with final finishing and polishing

asked if we had any jobs going for his son. We met Mark and hit it off, and with the help of the Welsh Government's Jobs for Wales scheme – that paid Mark's wages for six months – we took him on. He started on cutting out panels and learnt welding in the evening. He's a natural. I get the dirty job – polishing – but I get a lot of satisfaction finishing the product."

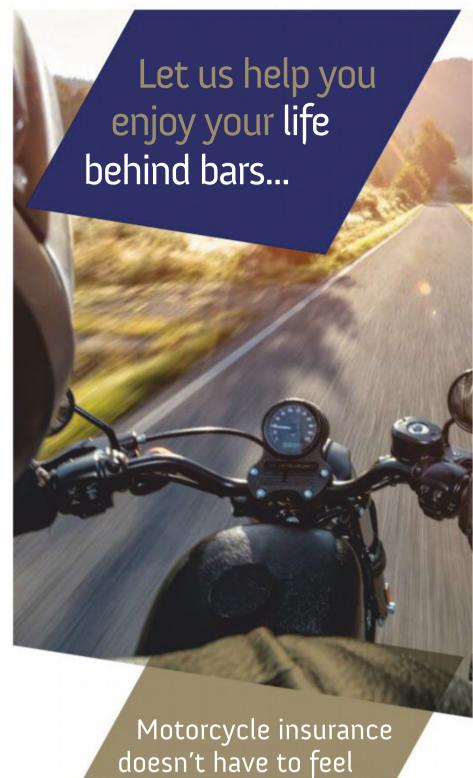
TAB II Classics' tanks are as highly regarded as the Terry Baker originals. They list 54 designs on their website (tabclassics.com) and can often modify tanks to fit other bikes by fitting a different base. They're light, superbly finished and beautiful to look at. And they're all made in the family tradition. Terry would be delighted.



Ailene crushing a welded joint on the English Wheel







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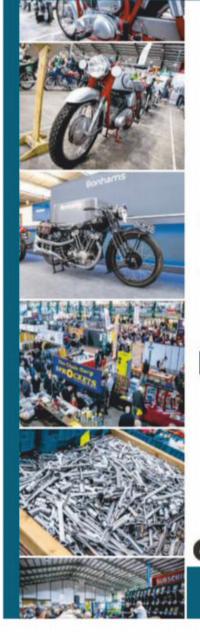
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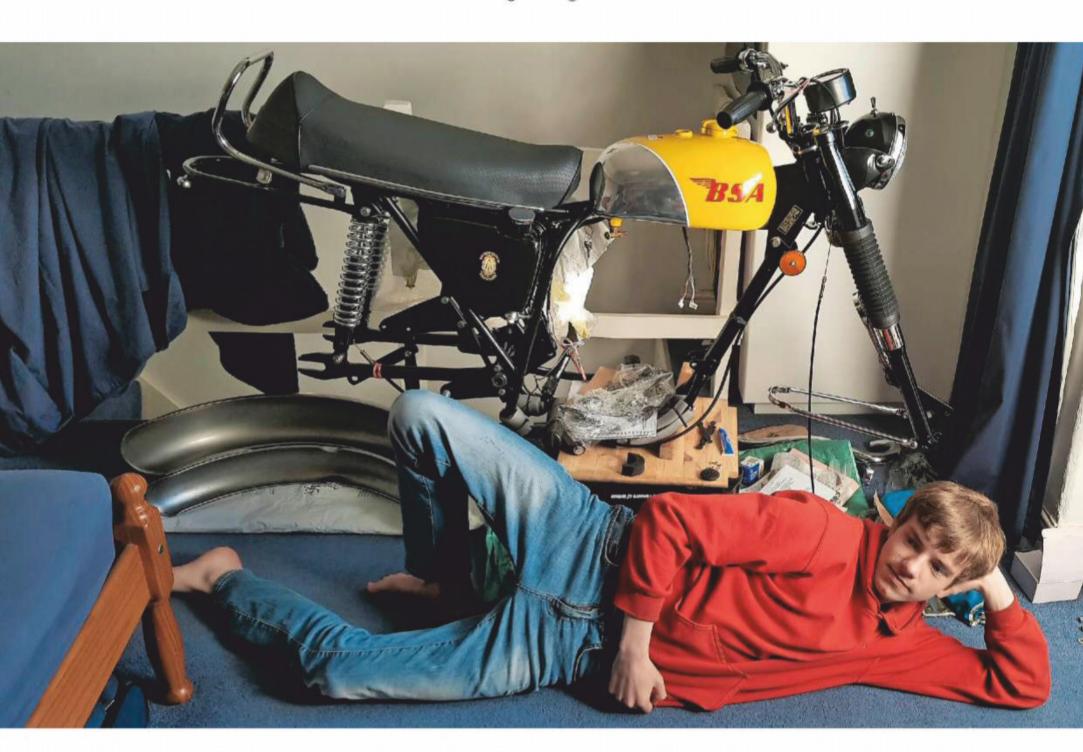




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BEDSIDE ** Manner

Teenagers eh? They leave dirty clothes all over the floor. Dried out pizzas under the bed. But not this lad. He's gone a step further, with a B44 restoration on his bedroom carpet

IT'S AUGUST 2018 and an email arrives from Nick Dunhill, a CB reader. Nick says: 'Hi Gary, I bought your August edition to read on the beach and it got me thinking. My son Tom (he's 15) and I are restoring a repatriated 1969 BSA B44 Victor Special. We're doing as much of the work as possible, but due to our lack of workshop facilities we're using a local classic bike restorer's expertise too.

Tom's very enthusiastic, quickly learning the art of restoration, and the finished elements of

the bike reside in his bedroom. We've carefully documented the rebuild so far with lots of pictures and wondered if you'd be interested in using it for a future article?'

Fast forward to the present day and the project is nearly there – they had hoped to nail it in time to get the finished bike in this 'young guns' issue, but, as if often the case, unforeseen issues have delayed the completion date.

Tom has written up the entire experience in his own words, starting over the page... •

BEEZA IN MY BEDROOM

RIGHT: Tom on his B44 Victor outside the family garage, just after he got it as a birthday gift



Words
TOM DUNHILL
Photography
NICK & TOM
DUNHILL

've had an interest in bikes for most of my life. This is probably because my dad and grandad have always had bikes, plus my uncle and cousin are keen motorcyclists, too. I was also taken to a number of bike shows and shops from an early age.

Me and my dad had wanted to restore a bike between us for a long time. When my dad was working at university, he restored a BSA C15 as an everyday rider. He followed that up with an A65T and a T150V Triumph Trident to high standards. This background, combined with the fact that we had a garage large enough to carry out a restoration, meant the only thing we were missing was a bike to restore.

So when my dad saw a BSA Victor Special for sale, he bought it as a joint present for my fifteenth birthday. We haggled with the dealer and he threw in a few spare parts as well. We thought a Victor would be a good choice, as my dad had already restored a unit single and knew a bit about them. Also, having matching numbers

WHEN MY DAD SAW A BSA VICTOR
SPECIAL FOR SALE, HE BOUGHT IT AS A
JOINT PRESENT FOR MY 15TH BIRTHDAY'

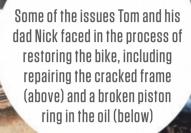
and being quite rare, the finished bike would be worth something like the cost of the restoration.

We wanted a BSA because they're British and once dominated the world market. My family also has a long history with BSA bikes; it's my grandad's preferred brand, as well as the last bike he owned before giving them up. And as I previously mentioned, my dad had restored BSAs before. They are also famously few of parts and easy to assemble, so my dad thought it would be the perfect bike for a beginner like me to start on. Not only that, lots of the parts are still available through the network of specialists in the UK, and of course the world via the internet.

About a week after my fifteenth birthday, the bike arrived at our garage. After taking several photographs of me sitting on it, we began to strip it down. The process was much simpler than we had anticipated; the bike came apart with very few problems – and those problems could be solved with a hammer and easing oil! However, during the process we noticed that the frame had cracked near the footrests and one of the fork sliders had split (presumably due to water ingress and subsequent freezing). Other than that, many of the parts were original and salvageable.

To remove the oil tank we needed to drain the oil, but we found it empty except for small pebbles and with a split filter gauze. When we took the sump plate and gauze off the engine, we found a gudgeon pin circlip and a bit of broken piston ring, but very little oil. The petrol •



















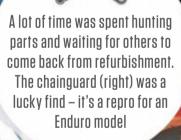


















tank was original, but had plenty of dents and scrapes. It had been repainted an odd green colour, but the original yellow BSA paint was underneath. The seat base was a bit rusty and had a couple of splits, but was salvageable (and my dad said that new pattern ones seldom fitted, anyway). The seat cover and foam were original, although they were very tired and worn.

The original wiring loom, headlight and switchgear was long gone, and the electrical components were connected with a minimal amount of wires – all of the same colour. The battery tray was missing and the battery had been replaced by a factory capacitor, suggesting the bike may have been used as a competition bike. The exhaust pipe was original – it had a BSA B44 stamp on the outside and a mouse nest on the inside, but it was in suitable condition for rechroming. The silencer, however, had disappeared.

The front mudguard was original but beyond repair, and the rear was from another bike. The front wheel rim was rusted through and the rear was an original Jones rim in good condition but off a Victor Roadster (we sold it on eBay to raise money for a replacement.) Both brake hubs were correct and salvageable.

We stripped everything off the frame and sent it away for repairs and powder coating. The rest of the parts were separated into scrap and bits to be reconditioned. We don't have a workshop, so the plan was to do as much as we could at home and farm out the parts for repair, reconditioning and refinishing, then reassemble the bike in our attic, which is also my bedroom – it seemed like a good idea at the time!

We found a local mechanic and British bike specialist in Rotherham to help us along the way. He's called Mick Goddard, he trades as RM Services and has been really helpful, offering assistance and advice, and carrying out work we couldn't do at home.

Most of the time that's elapsed on the restoration has been spent waiting for parts to be repaired, delivered or painted. This was largely due to some of the parts being almost impossible to find (and the fact that most of the parts we found needed to be repaired, modified or

'MY BEDROOM WAS FULL OF THINGS FOR THE BIKE. I WAS ALWAYS STANDING ON STUFF'

painted). Despite this, my bedroom soon became full of stuff for the bike, which meant that I couldn't leave my room without standing on something both expensive and sharp [makes a change from standing on Lego bricks, Tom – dad].

Burton Bike bits had a rare side panel for a '69-'70 model and an appropriate headlamp shell. The burst fork slider was a goner, but the internet came up trumps – we managed to find an NOS fork slider and a pair of headlamp brackets/ears at Mike's Classic Cycle Spares in Australia. The rest of the internal fork parts are all service parts and came mainly from Draganfly Motorcycles or Feked Classic Bike Parts here in the UK.

The forks were reconditioned by Mick, and the finished forks, headlamp and brackets, side panel and oil tank were all sent off to the Accident Repair Centre paint shop in Sheffield for black paint. We wanted a bit of contrast between the black of the powder-coated frame and that of the forks, etc, and we figured the factory finish would be like that. The Accident Repair Centre also applied some transfers to the bike where appropriate and lacquered over them.

We drilled the rear mudguard, which came from Autocycle Engineering, and sent it to Prestige plating in Mexborough. The front 'guard is a repro from Burton Bike Bits. The wheels were rebuilt using parts from Central Wheel Components, Feked and Draganfly. We tried to re-use as many of the original fasteners as possible – not just on the wheels, but also throughout the whole bike. Lots of them were replated at a company in Sheffield called Northern Blackening, although many were also replaced with stainless items from CPC Engineering and Middletons.

The other parts that proved tricky to find were the silencer and chainguard. We chanced upon a silencer on Armour Motor Products' website, listed under the wrong model. As for the chainguard, we could have bought a rusty, split original from the USA via eBay, but the fact that it would have ended up costing almost £350 (including shipping, tax, repairs, etc) that put us off. A chance meeting with Dave Smith (aka Rupert Ratio) at the Stafford show revealed that the Victor Enduro guard was the same pressing as the Victor Special item. Ripe

BELOW: Tom's following in his dad Nick's footsteps.
Nick rebuilt an A65T in this room when it was the attic

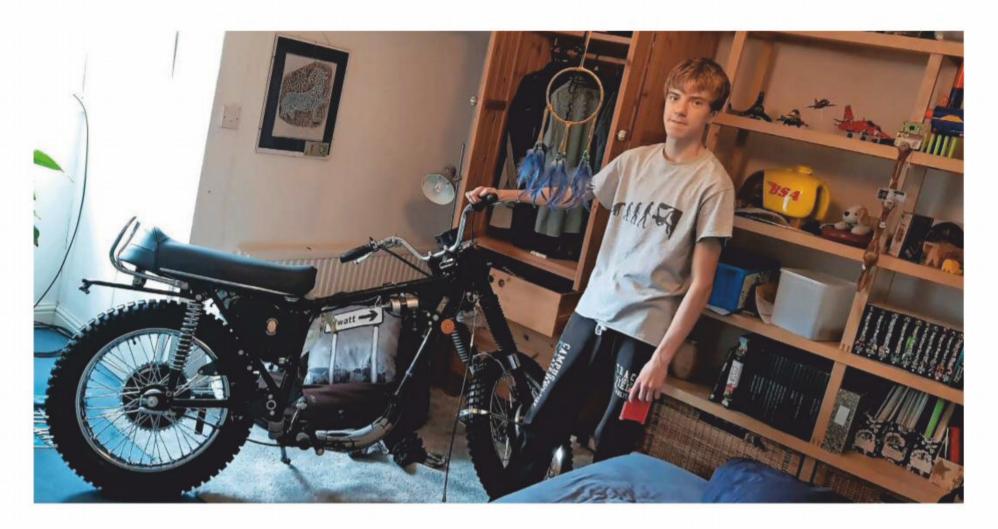


Motorcycles were selling repros for an Enduro for £130, so we bought one and Mick reconfigured the brackets for us. The speedometer was another problem that needed to be addressed, namely the bike didn't have one. We found an original, reconditioned unit at Classic Speedometers in Worksop.

The tank went to Dent Removal Services in Pickering, where it was stripped and a big hole was discovered in the tunnel for the mounting bolt. The tunnel was cut out, the hole welded up and then it was reattached, making a great job of it. When it had been repainted by ARC, it looked a million dollars. Stephen Smethurst is a magician in Salford who makes alloy castings look brand new – he did our brake plates, rear light casting and primary drive cover.

The seat was recovered for us by Leightons in Birmingham. Martrim in Crewe sell some charcoal grey perforated material that we used – it's very close to the unobtainable original seat cover. My mum bought my dad a wiring harness for Christmas 2018 and by then we had pretty much everything we need.

We started reassembly on a hot summer's day on the garden table, pretty much as soon as the frame came back from the powder coaters. The first part that we attached were the Oddie clips with a pop-rivet gun – not that exciting, but you have to start somewhere. We then attached the battery tray, the brake pedal and the footrests as well as a number of mounting bolts that we left in their correct brackets for safe keeping. Next we installed the swingarm. Mick had replaced the



ABOVE: Once the engine's in, it'll just be a question of getting it down the stairs and into the great outdoors...

Silentbloc bearings, and reamed them to fit. This was one of the harder parts to attach to the frame, because we had to tighten the bolt through the swingarm very tight indeed. Mick lent us a very long spanner to do it! We proudly carried the completed basic frame with the swingarm up the stairs to my bedroom without putting a hole in the wall or tearing any wallpaper.

Mick also pressed the steering head bearings in place and the top and bottom yokes were fitted with plenty of greasy balls. The next obvious parts to fit was the forks. This wasn't particularly difficult, but we had to do it twice because we had forgot to put a spacer in between the yoke and the fork springs. I watched my dad struggle

'WE WANTED TO RESTORE A CLASSIC BIKE TOGETHER. IT WAS A FUN, EDUCATING EXPERIENCE FOR ME'

to get the forks through both yokes against the external fork springs. I read the BSA manual and realised that there was a service tool available to help with this task – after we got one, the job became very simple.

We spent a couple of days connecting up the wiring. It is very simple, but it's important that everything is positioned properly so no strain is put on the connectors. There seemed to be an awful lot of wiring in the headlamp! Maybe at some time in the future we'll fit indicators – I think it'd make the bike more suitable for riding in a big city.

Mick cleaned up the body of the Amal Concentric carb for us in his ultrasonic bath. It looked very new, and my dad bought a lot of new jets and sliders for it. I reassembled it myself and reset the float heights using a simple tool Mick made for me.

The rest of the cycle parts went on without much problem. The mudguards and wheels were easy to fit, and the original seat base fitted first time, too. The side panel was more difficult – we had to do a fair bit of work with a knocking stick on the frame brackets! The oil tank went on and we were just about there.

All that's left now is to get the engine finished – it's been dismantled and examined, but the guy who will be reassembling it has been taken ill, so there's been a delay. The cylinder head is completely worn out and everything needs replacing, but the cylinder had been bored out to +0.0060in with a brand new piston and barely used since – you could still see the honing marks. The crank has been sent off for regrinding and the big-end bearings will need replacing. The covers have been sent to another specialist for reconditioning and polishing.

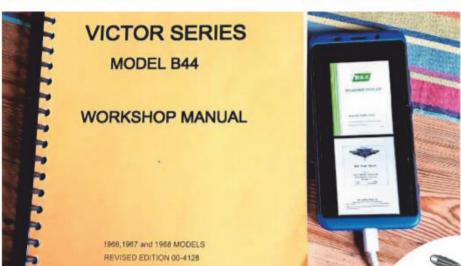
All the contents of the primary chaincase have seen better days – my dad reckons the primary chain had broken at some point and the hole in the primary cover had been its escape route.

As regards how we're going to get the bike out of my bedroom when it's finished, my dad has a choice of two plans: a) we take the roof off the house (he hasn't run that one past my mum yet) or b) the engine turns up on a glorious spring day, we partly dismantle the bike, carry it downstairs (with the wallpaper remaining undamaged) and reassemble it outside in the sunshine. He admits that both of them sound like fantasies, but he did manage to carry out a plan b) in the 2000s with a BSA A65T, which descended from the attic to behind our sofa in the sitting room for a week or so.

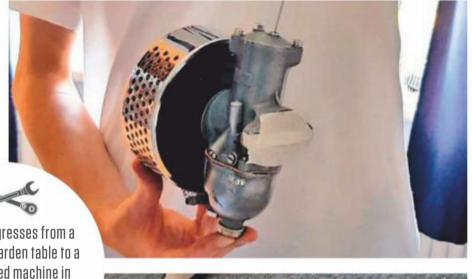
I'm really looking forward to having my fillings shaken out riding such a brilliant example of our British motorcycling past. I definitely plan to ride the bike, but because its 440cc I'm not old enough to do it legally on the road yet, so I might suggest selling it and buy something that I can ride. My dad, however, says he might sell his modern Triumph and use the money to buy a bike for me. My mum is totally against me owning a bike at all, whether it's a classic from the '60s or not; until recently, she assumed that we planned to sell it once we knew that it worked.

The thing to remember is that me and my dad did this because we wanted to restore a classic bike together, what we restored didn't matter too much. It was a really fun, educating experience for someone of my age. It also helped me in my sixth-form BTEC Engineering course, because I'm now familiar with lots of the tools and machinery we use in the workshop. I'd love to do another project once we've finished this one.'

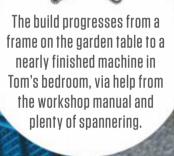
























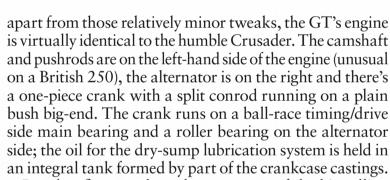
Royal Enfield Continental GT

For young learner riders, who had been restricted to 250cc bikes by legislation in 1961, this was a dream come true









But that five-speed gearbox was one of the big selling points of the Continental GT. Who needed to turn to Japanese bikes when you could have an off-the-peg British café racer with an 85mph top speed, bags of style and the sophistication of five ratios? Sadly, it was often that last feature that spoiled the pleasure of GT ownership for many hard-riding young owners. The five-speed unit only has

one set of layshaft dogs for second, third and fourth gears (there are two dogs in the four-speed unit) and the pinions are slimmed down to allow them to fit in the same space as the four-speeder. It was a recipe for mechanical mayhem - and often prompted owners into retro-fitting a four-speed gear cluster.

The pre-unit Clipper, introduced in 1954, might not have

been the stuff of teenage dreams, but the unit-construction Crusader was a step in the right direction when it appeared for 1956. More was to come. A Crusader Sport model joined the line-up in 1959 with the five-speed Super Five arriving for 1962. But it was the

young riders that were buying into motorcycling.

n the post-war era, Redditch-based Royal

Enfield earned a deserved reputation for producing solidly-engineered and (largely)

well-built machines in the traditional mould.

Their Bullet range of 350cc and 500cc singles

is well known for longevity - a production run of almost

60 years, from 1948 to 1997, when production of the 350

Bullet Standard (by then manufactured in India) finally

Enfield's twins enjoyed a similarly worthy reputation in

the '50s and early '60s. But for the British parent company,

the swinging '60s brought a new challenge and changing

markets. Vital to meeting that challenge was the rise of the

250 'learner' market – and the increasingly demanding

ended, certainly isn't bad.

really upped the ante for Enfield's 250cc offerings.

1963 launch of the Continental that

The Continental's quasi-café racer style certainly broadened its appeal with the younger set, who were already being tempted by increasingly sophisticated offerings from Japan. But it was the Continental GT that would become the object of lust for a generation of L-plate riders. Surely, here was the best-looking British 250 ever built. Who could resist the sporty, bright red glassfibre tank, humped seat, sinuous exhaust run and racy little flyscreen? Why, you could even order a colour-matched Avon Speedflow fairing for the ultimate in racer chic. Adding substance to style were further tweaks to the engine, making the GT the most powerful – and fastest – British 250 on the road.

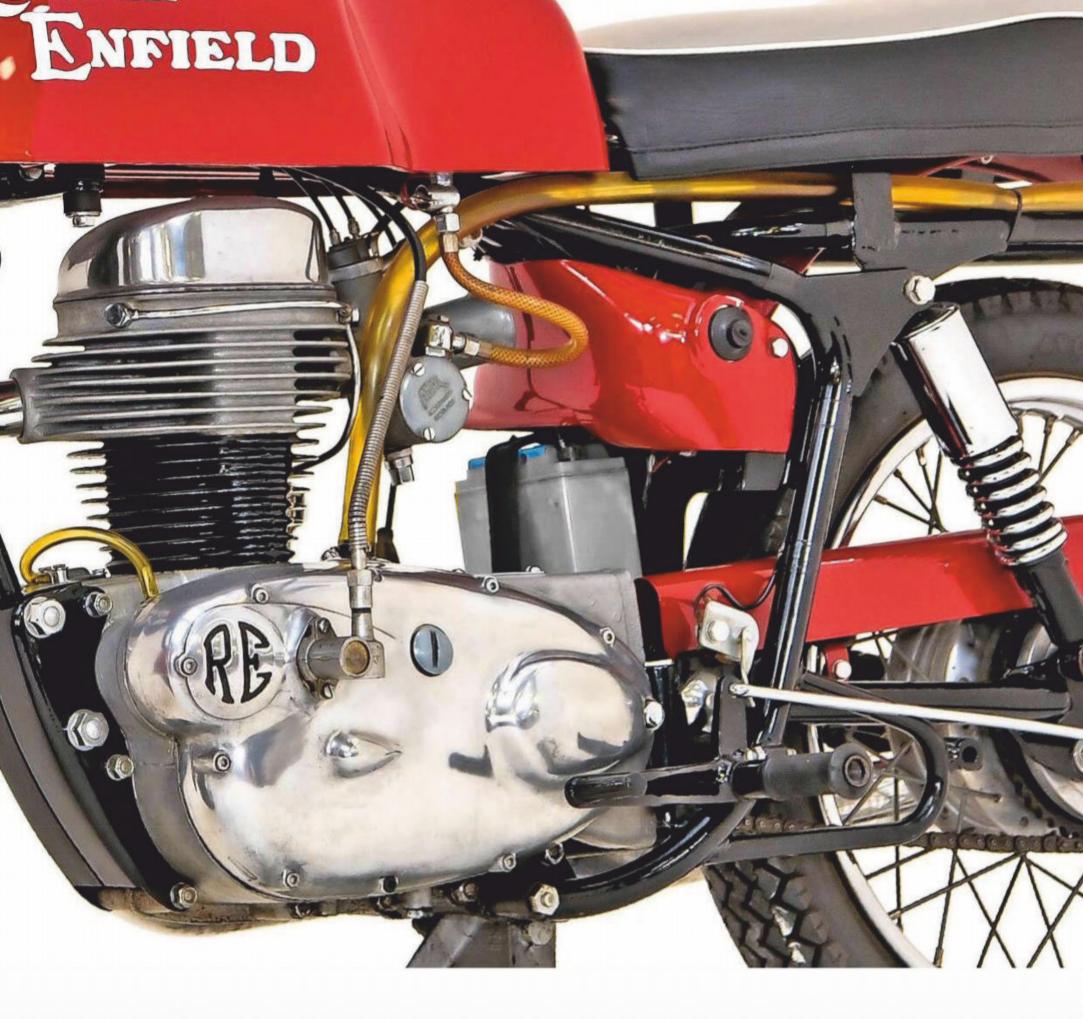
A compression ratio up to 9.5:1, plus the hot cam, lighter flywheel, larger inlet valve and wider inlet tract from the Continental – and the five-speed gearbox – provide the step up in go compared to the base-model Crusader. But,

That didn't stop Royal Enfield from pushing the performance credentials of the GT, though. When the model was announced in late 1964, Enfield sent a team of five riders - including race star John Cooper - to ride a stock GT non-stop from Land's End to John O'Groats. On the way, Cooper thrashed the little 250 round a few laps of Silverstone Circuit, clocking a fastest lap at 73mph. It was heady stuff for a 250 and couldn't have hurt sales.

Sadly, though, Royal Enfield were in financial trouble almost as soon as the GT hit the streets. Just two years after the GT's launch, the Redditch factory was sold and production of the whole 250 range was brought to a halt. Production of the Interceptor twin continued at the company's Upper Westwood plant, but it was the end of the road for the dashing Continental GT.

Many thanks to the National Motorcycle Museum for providing this bike for our photographs.

ABOVE: A 9.5:1 compression ratio and a hot cam made this the most powerful and fastest British 250 on the road. The five-speed gearbox was its Achilles heel





It doesn't look like much, but the front brake works well if kept in good fettle



An Amal Concentric carburettor feeds the 248cc single-cylinder engine



ANDY BARRETT

The family motorcycling gene took time to activate in Andy Barrett, but now it has, there couldn't be a more passionate young man to be looking after the late Ralph Seymour's personal collection of Velocettes

WORDS: GARY PINCHIN PHOTOGRAPHY: GARY MARGERUM AND THE SEYMOUR FAMILY ARCHIVE

o tag 29-year-old Andy Barrett as a 'collector' is probably a little wide of the mark. He's actually the custodian of what was once the personal property of his late grandfather Ralph Seymour, the well-respected Velocette specialist dealer and tuner from Thame, near Oxford. Andy inherited the precious family heirlooms in the form of several very desirable Velocette motorcycles, associated spares stock and copious memorabilia. But he's no different to any other collector we've met, in his passion for classic motorcycles – and Velocettes in particular.

When Ralph died in 1994, Andy was only four years old, so he never got to know his grandad. Andy's mother kept his business ticking over until she passed away in 2009. Until that point, Andy reveals he'd had little interest in the family business.

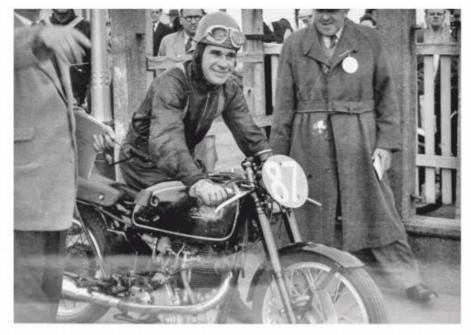
"I was never into bikes for years," he admits. "I was around it all the time and even bought an AJS Regal Raptor in 2008 when I was 18. But I only got that because my mates convinced me it was a good idea. I rode it for five years and was surprised how reliable it proved, despite the abuse I gave it. I was still at school at the time, held back a year because I failed all my exams."

After his mother passed away, Andy finished his schooling and stepped straight into running the family business! He says: "By then the shop was only selling parts and doing a few restorations, so when I went there it was with a plan to clear everything out and sell off the business, while scouring the workshop for Ralph's personal bikes, relevant spares and paperwork to keep within the family."

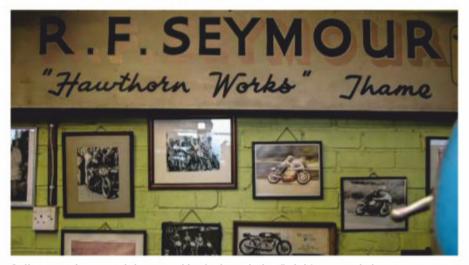
But Andy's interest in two wheels had been awakened. "It was shortly after mum died that the motorbike thing finally clicked with me. It was like a big light bulb suddenly being switched on – and I've no idea







Andy's grandfather Ralph Seymour, back in his Velocette racing days



Collection of memorabilia owned by Andy includes Ralph's original shop sign

what triggered it. Maybe her death made me realise just how much our family was in involved in motorcycling. I suddenly felt myself drawn into researching all the history of our family and it was all about bikes. History had always interested me at school, but this was personal."

Business wasn't great, however. "The shop was barely making any money. The rent and rates were taking up any income, so I had to work part-time in the evenings at Pets at Home to get any kind of living."

It took its toll. At the age of 23, Andy had a nervous breakdown. "My mum died when I was 19. My dad was lost without her. I saw my nan daily to make sure she was OK. I was trying to sort the business and, on top of all of that, my own relationship ended. I took six months off, saw a therapist and came out of all that in a much better place.

"I joined Bonhams Auctioneers as administrator for the motorcycles department and worked my way up to being a specialist. It's a fascinating, addictive job, as you never know what's around the corner! I'm very fortunate to have a job in which I get to indulge my passion and help people. The travelling and living in America was a fantastic perk, too."

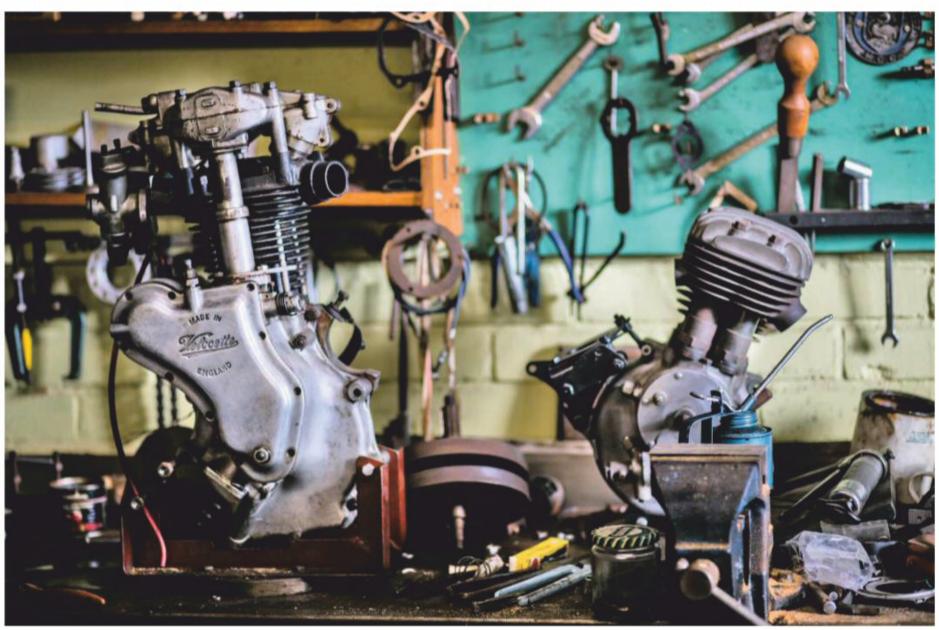
"I'm also drawn to engineering, because when I finally got around to looking closely at Ralph's motorcycles as I cleared the workshop, I could see his fantastic attention to detail. It fascinated me.

"I suppose the truth is that I love classic bikes in general; working for someone like Bonhams lets me feed my habit and learn about all types of bikes from different eras, as well as meeting fascinating people from all walks of life. Mostly, though, I'm drawn to Velocette – not just because of the family connection, but because I just love the history of how they created their bikes and developed aspects of motorcycle engineering which are still in use today, like the positive foot gearchange."

He laughs and changes the mood by saying: "I suppose we really ought to venture into the workshop and see the bikes..."

The workshop is to die for. That familiar old bike smell greets us as Andy pulls back the door to reveal racks of spares, tools and, centre stage, a handful of Velocettes – more oily-rag clean than pristine. These are bikes that are still ridden, rather than hidden.

We virtually trip over a neat MSS inside the door. "It's a 1954 bike that Ralph bought in 1956," says our host. "Back in the day, it had a



On the workbench is a prototype 250cc side-valve engine, nicknamed 'Little Donkey' that Velocette planned to build (right). Next to it is a pre-war MAC engine



Andy looking well pleased with his inheritance, as well he might, when it includes such treasures as his grandfather's Velocettes and the tools to fettle them

big screen and a sidecar. He used it for his work commute. Nan told me that during wintertime he'd put a shovel in the sidecar and ride until he ploughed into a snow drift, then get off and shovel the snow out of the way and carry on..." He rolls his eyes at the thought of his grandad's dogged determination to work.

Ralph traded the MSS for a MAC, which then became the business hack at Seymour's, but at some point in the '80s he managed to get the MSS back. "I discovered it in boxes when I cleared the workshop; nan told me Ralph planned a restoration, but never got around to it. I moved the boxes to my bedroom and eventually got my friend Barrie, who's a mate of Geoff Dodkin [a renowned Velocette racer and tuner] to do me a dry build. I rode it in that state for a year, then I stripped it with another friend, Adrian; we got everything painted up and then did a full build, with a lot of guidance from Barrie. I've done around

THE MSS. BELIEVE ME, THEY

7000 miles on it since, including a track session at Dijon during the Coupes Moto Légende festival. It's such an easy bike to get on with that I've even let friends learn how to ride on it. I've also taken girls on the back of the MSS, too – and believe me, they love it!"

The bike that catches the eye, though, is the faded green Rickmanframed racer that sits proudly atop the workbench. "This is Katie – all of Ralph's bikes have names," says Andy. "He built it in 1967, with a 1939 KTT MkVIII engine from his original MkVIII that he purchased new in 1939 and raced at the TT between 1946 and 1952.

"Ralph stopped racing after the 1952 TT, because his sisters harangued him so much that their mother was getting ulcers, worrying about him when he was on the track. Ralph was especially close to his mum, as his dad had died early in his life. After he stopped racing, he spent all his time preparing and tuning bikes. As I was only four when he died, I only learned about him from talking to nan."



After giving up racing, Ralph spent all his time preparing bikes like this Velo KTT



All Ralph's bikes had names; this 1967 Velo Thruxton is known as 'Bellowing Bella'



Andy's collection includes historic racing numberplates, bibs and other mementos



Ralph collected these trophies, including three from the Manx GP, two TT replicas and a 1937 BMCRC (Brooklands) cup presented by Sir Algernon Guinness Bart

Getting back to how the Rickman evolved from a conventional KTT, Andy explains that as part of its development, Ralph made his own Featherbed-style frame (it stands on its end, against the wall next to the Rickman), but then Rickman frames came along in the early '60s so he built this bike in six weeks to race in the 1967 Manx.

"Nan told me it was a real rush job and that he spent many late nights trying to get the bike finished in time. It has the rare works 'turbo-cooled' [ventilated] front drum brake. Ralph had a guy called Vern Wallis working for him; Vern's dad worked at Brooklands with Eric Fernihough, and Vern became like a son to Ralph."

Ralph didn't win anything major as a racer, but a lot of good privateers rode his bikes, too. Fred Walton rode his bike – a bright red Velo with a white fairing – to 19th place in the 1973 Senior TT.

The original KTT frame that donated its engine for the Rickman still sits in the workshop – with a huge aluminium fuel tank adorning the frame. Andy says: "This was Ralph's original 1939 KTT MkVIII which he bought in time for the August bank holiday race at Donington Park that year. Unfortunately, he crashed it. Then came the war, so he covered the battered bike in a blanket, hid it behind the sofa in his mum's house and went off to war. He was scared about motorcycles being commissioned to be melted down for the war effort."

Ralph was in the REME (The Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers), so he never saw front-line action. Post-war, he went to the Manx in 1946 with the same bike and raced it in the Junior, also riding a Norton in the Senior. In the Junior he was allocated 'Number One' so he was the very first rider off down Bray Hill after the war! His best TT results were in 1951 and 1952 (45th and 38th respectively), winning replicas as a finisher. As Andy points out, while he wasn't one of the superstars of the era, he was a leading privateer having a good time!

"Ralph was also a whizz working with aluminium," says Andy. "As you can see from the oversize tank he made for the KTT. He loved making things with the stuff. Look at the pushrod tunnels on his bikes;

'RALPH WAS THE FIRST RIDER OFF DOWN BRAY HILL AFTER THE WAR'

I'm sure he saw what Ducati had done with their singles and thought: 'I could do that'. He made the aluminium dynamo casings, fitting them to add rigidity to the engine/frame connection. Without them the frame flexed too much. See how he dished the aluminium wheel hubs...

"He was a master craftsman, he really knew what he was doing, yet he was actually trained as a carpenter at Parker Knoll, hence every workbench and tool cabinet in here [all made with wood] was made by him. I've no idea where he got his engineering knowledge. I never got around to asking nan about that, which is something I regret, but I suspect he was self-taught."

For years Ralph worked at the Harris car and bike dealership in High Wycombe, but in 1960 he set up his own bike business in Thame. He was a Velocette and BSA dealer, although the shop later had Lambretta, Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha franchises. The business finally closed in 2012, and Andy's nan died in 2018.

Ralph was never employed by Velocette but, as Andy points out, the Birmingham-based manufacturer was a big family business and they looked after the independent dealers who supported them. Luckily, Ralph kept copious family photo albums and scrapbooks full of pictures clipped from the motorcycle press of the era, which in themselves form a comprehensive journal of record.

Another race bike in the workshop is Ralph's 1967 Velo Thruxton known as 'Bellowing Bella'. Andy explains: "This one was ridden by Danny Shimmin in the production TT in 1977 and '78. He didn't have great results on it, but set a really fast lap of 93.5mph in practice – pretty impressive for a four-stroke, pushrod, single-cylinder production bike. It has never had an amazing racing history as such, but has been used on short circuits ever since the production TTs and is still pretty much original. I don't think I'll ever restore it. It would ruin all the history.

On the bench is a prototype 250cc side-valve engine that Velocette planned to build. Andy found it when clearing out Ralph's shop. "I've even got the blueprints for it. It was known as 'Little Donkey', but nothing came of it. Ralph had it on display at Stanford Hall for a





ABOVE: On one of the benches in Andy's workshop sits a pock-marked Rickman frame. He intends to build a Rickman Velocette road bike using this frame, the intention being to base it on the photograph of one of Ralph's builds, shown in the photograph on the right



ABOVE: This Rickman-framed racer goes by the name of Katie and was built by Ralph in 1967 using a 1939 KTT MkVIII engine. The mottled green pudding basin is the one Ralph used when he raced. BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Ralph made this Featherbed-style frame himself; Fred Walton on Ralph's Rickman Velocette; rare works ventilated front drum brake on the Rickman







while." Next to it is a pre-war MAC engine. "Another gem I found in the workshop," he grins. "It's my test engine – I'm using it to learn how to build one from the ground up. I can do all the basics – the maintenance, timing, etc, but I don't have the experience of building engines. I'm lucky that I have Velo experts like Geoff Dodkin and Nick Payton as friends who will help me fix stuff, but I need to learn how to build engines and gearboxes. I figure if I can do that, then I'm pretty well covered, but it's not going to be easy. The MkVIII KTT, for example, is quite a complex thing and you need to have insider knowledge, like fitting shims at room temperature, ensuring the girder forks are correctly set up, the clutch... and other Velo quirks to build a Velocette correctly. The devil is in the detail and it's the detail I need to learn."

Then on another bench sits a pock-marked Rickman frame – another Barrett project! "I'm building a Rickman Velo using this frame and it will be based on one of Ralph's builds. I've no idea who Ralph built the bike for in the photo [see previous page], but I like the style and

1'M BUILDING A RICKMAN VELO BASED ON ONE OF RALPH'S BUILDS'

want to build a road bike based on it. The frame is the last one that was left in the workshop when we closed down, though I'm not sure what it was ever used for. There were two others we had which were sold purely as Rickman frames and definitely not Seymour specials because they were never used as such.

"I'm going for a high-spec Venom engine, anodised black. It'll have a Fontana front drum, just like the bike in the picture. I'm not sure what finish I'd have on the frame, probably not nickel plate because most Rickman frames have that finish," he says and pauses, allowing the ideas to percolate... "I'm thinking I might do it black – and have black rims, too. The entire bike would be black with some gold pinstripe highlights. The most important thing is to build it with the same kind of detail someone like Ralph or Francis Beart put into their bikes. It's definitely going to be a good project for me to learn from."

We stand looking at the frame, the picture and back, imagining how cool the finished bike might look. Then Andy cuts away...

"What about some riding shots? I can ride this KTT," he offers. "It's road legal, if a little bit loud..."



Andy has kept Ralph's scrapbooks full of clippings from the motorcycle press



Andy as a three-year old on the same bike he rode during our visit (right)



This Velocette KTT typifies the idiosyncrasies of the marque that Andy finds so captivating to be involved with and engaging to ride (as his grandfather did before him)



Andy out for a ride on his KTT, which is road legal and makes its presence known via an open megaphone exhaust – it's a real bombardment of the senses



No doubt Ralph would be pleased that his grandson's taken on his old bikes

Andy grabs his leather jacket and helmet, wheels the bike out, turns on the fuel, runs alongside it, leaps onto it and bump-starts it. The KTT barks into life, its open mega filling the nearby industrial estate. As we watch him ride away, an old boy stands at the zebra crossing, transfixed. He's either never seen or heard the like of it before or knows exactly what it is and is wondering what the heck a KTT is doing thundering around his locality.

The bike is apparently called Eileen. In the late '80s Ralph bought it in tea chests and then used the parts to build this bike for Andy's nan. Ralph got Bernard Guerin, a Frenchman who had been national champion as far back as 1953, to ride it in the 1993 classic races on the Southern 100 course. While wheeling it out and getting ready to bump it, Andy mentions with a smirk: "I do want to ride it at the Goodwood Festival. I can't use at the Revival, I'm not a good enough racer, but I think it would be fun to run it up the hill at the Festival – and people would appreciate seeing it."

Andy is still buzzing from his little spin on the bike: "I just love riding these things because you can feel it working away underneath you. It's got a life of its own and you can hear everything going on. Someone wrote that I was into riding Velocettes because of the family connection, but that's bollocks. I just love the experience riding old bikes gives you.

"I ride more modern bikes, but they are so perfect – you can't even feel or hear the engine running. And they don't leak oil. I own a 1989 Honda GB500TT which has a '60s style, but there's something that the old bikes have that can't be replicated in these modern bikes – that soulfulness or character that each one exudes... or something philosophical like that," he says while laughing and rolling his eyes.

"I love the reaction of people when they see and hear bikes like this. If I can inspire one youngster to want a motorcycle after seeing me on the Velo, then that would be fantastic." •



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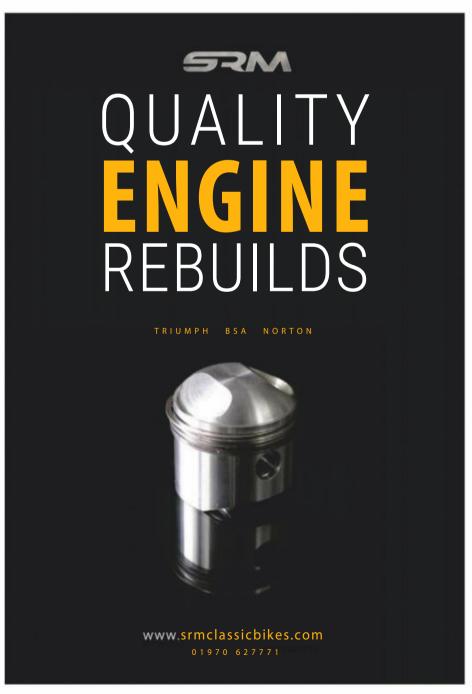
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RICK'S PATCH

Inspiring the next generation

This special 'Young Guns' issue of *CB* focuses on a subject close to Rick's heart

MOTORCYCLING MISSED a generation, thanks to overly restrictive legislation and maybe the 'born again' boom that made it all a bit middle-aged. But thankfully, as I hope this month's issue proves, bikes – and especially classics – are 'cool' again. So how can we help younger riders?

Prices are the big problem. With wallets bled dry by test fees, there's little chance of affording what you want – even in project or basket case form (my old low-cost option). Yes, there are 'affordable classics' – but all the young people I meet seem to want British twins, not utility lightweights. There's still loads of projects around whose owners have no time to build them. Youth at

'ENCOURAGEMENT COSTS NOTHING. THESE GUYS ARE ON THEIR OWN JOURNEY'

WHO IS RICK?

Rick Parkington has been riding and fixing classic bikes for decades. He lives and fettles in a fully tooled up shed in his back garden. least has time on its side – and I can testify that helping a young person get onto a classic bike is far more rewarding than counting your profits.

We can't all offer a beginner a bargain, but encouragement costs nothing. Accentuate the positive – don't rubbish their café racer dream because clip-ons give you backache; these guys are on their own journey and would rather hear 'how' than 'what' to do.

Take Will Coleman. He admits to having 'a chopper itch' and is currently operating on a Kawasaki Z440 whose seriously corroded back end justified surgery (see pic above). Choppers aren't my thing, but I ventured a few suggestions and loaned him my 1970s American chopper mags for inspiration.

Thing is, time teaches us skills and refines our tastes – but it's important to separate the two. If Will wants to build a chopper, I'd rather see if my experience can help him than start telling him: 'You don't want to do that...'

Think back for a minute – isn't that what we all wanted when we were young?

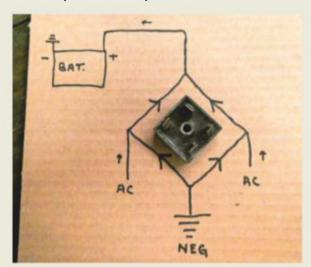
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HOW TO

Testing a rectifier

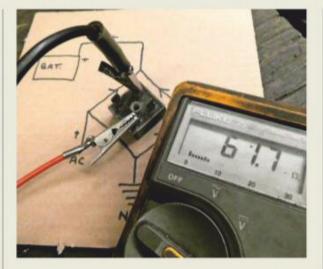
My Triumph never breaks down... except for last week. Changing the rectifier sorted the problem, but here's how I tested it to make sure it really was the problem...



Arrows are 'diodes', one-way valves. If positive is 'North', alternator AC comes in E and W, following the arrows, it exits N to the battery. South (negative) is earth.



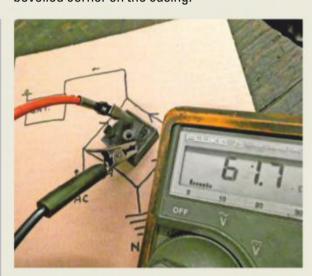
With no battery, rectifier failure will stop my bike dead, so I carry a spare. Tapping a 1/4in BSF thread through the centre makes a neater fitting than a fiddly nut and bolt.



Current travels + to –, the diodes will only allow current that way. With positive meter lead to the South terminal, current should flow to N. It does; that's good...



The positive terminal isn't always marked – it's the spade at 90° to the rest. Sometimes there's a tiny pip or a bevelled corner on the casing.



... ah, but that isn't! It can also flow backwards; diode failure allowed my alternator output to head straight to earth. Lucky I had that spare to get me home.

THE BIG FIX

Guiding it home

I do like an open-and-shut case. My mate Phil Clarke up in Scotland got in touch to say he'd put his rigid Ariel VG500 back on the road after a few years' break, but was having trouble with a valve nipping up in its guide when the engine got hot. "Do you remember I had trouble with that when I first built it, having fitted new valves and guides?" he said. "But I'm sure after that we reamed them out and cured the problem; so why do you think it's happening again?"

The clearance between a valve and its guide is automatically provided by the valve stem being ground a couple of thou undersize – so typically a ⁵/16in (0.312in) stem will measure 0.310in. The valve may be an easy fit in the guide in your hand, but the tight press-fit into the head is likely to shrink the bore in the middle, causing problems unless it is reamed to size after fitting. Even if the valve seems to fit OK on assembly, it's still worth reaming because it may tighten with engine heat – like Phil's. Because the clearance is on the stem, you just need a standard-size reamer.

Great, but if we did that, how come Phil's valve is too tight again? I could only think of one possibility.

"Did you put sealer in your tank?" I asked. "Er, yes... why?"



Phil phoned a few days later to confirm my suspicion that the previously reliable sealer was now sticky as a result of ethanol attack. The sealant dissolved in the fuel can, then produce a similar sabotage effect to sugar in the tank, gumming up the valve in the heat. To make sure, Phil fitted an unsealed tank from another bike and it ran fine, the problem returning after refitting the old tank.

New valve guides should always be reamed after fitting



RICK ANSWERS YOUR QUERIES

Spring time

It's always a relief to discover that an email titled 'Pi**ed off' isn't my fault... Regular patient Eddy Hamley had just spent a freezing afternoon trying unsuccessfully to replace his Triumph 3T kickstart spring. "I've done it easily before!" wailed Eddy, "But I just cannot get the gearbox cover on! What am I doing wrong?"

It's usually the later 3TA and derivatives that cause trouble. On these you have to wind the spring tight with the sharp end embedded in your finger until you can clip the retaining washer onto a shaft that coyly retreats from your desperate

approach. As a bonus, just when you think it's secure, the spring breaks free like a banshee and hacks a chunk out of your sore digit. But I've never heard of trouble from the meek, mild-mannered pre-unit 350.

Eddy said he'd positioned the clock-type spring correctly on the shaft, but couldn't get the cover the last ¼in. That's about the thickness of the spring, and I wondered if he hadn't wound up the coil to tension it. I have my own 3T gearbox, so I pulled it apart. The shaft needs to be turned one full rotation to achieve the correct tension – and. sure enough, if you don't do it, the coils don't fit the space provided. Hoping that's your answer, Eddy, 'cos I've put it all back together again now...

RIGHT: Stick to the middle, it's safer than being on the edge





EDGE YOUR BETS

Mr Greer in Northern Ireland writes to ask the offset figure from the face of the wheel hub to the rim edge to assemble a Triumph Trident conical-hub front wheel.

Usually a rim is central between the spoke flanges, but with half-width hubs like this, that may not apply. I managed to find a Trident to measure in my travels, but the problem is that rim widths vary; the wheel I measured was 26mm from a straight edge to the rim – but it was a flangeless alloy, so it may not be the same as a standard chromed rim.

It's better to measure to the centre of the rim – the middle of the tyre valve, for example; then the actual rim width is immaterial. This seemed to be 60mm and I would trust this over the other figure. Better still, if you have the bike, once laced up you can true the wheel using the fork as a building jig and get it dead centre.



LEFT: Spring is here for a Triumph gearbox

RICK'S TOP TIPS

AN IDLER NOTION

Made this pinion years ago to fit a (non-standard) distributor to a BSA twin with a suspect magneto. It's modified from a spare cam idler pinion with the correct number of teeth. It worked, too. Well, at least it proved that the magneto wasn't the problem...



THIS MAKES ME GRIT MY TEETH

Got to say I am not a big fan of grit blasting. It gets rid of rust quickly, but it can be brutal and leaves the metal so dry it rapidly rusts again unless you get some paint on immediately.



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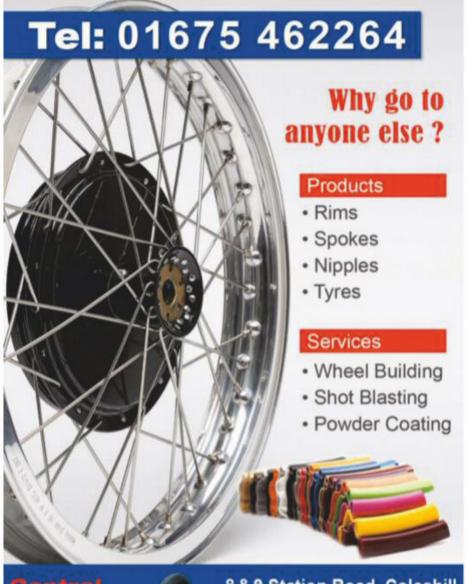
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RICK ANSWERS YOUR QUERIES



FORK TALK

Reassembling the forks on his 1948 Ariel NG, Maurice Sanders was puzzled to read in his Ariel manual: 'Before fitting the coil springs ensure that they are well packed with thick grease, otherwise there is a tendency for a dry spring to 'chatter' against the outer covers.'

"Is this necessary?" he asks. "And I hear on the Ariel Club Forum that the forks can be tricky to get back in place to fit the top nuts; any tips on doing this without despair?"

Well, I think the grease is just there to prevent noise echoing. I wouldn't expect the springs to touch the actual shrouds, although I've

'GREASED SPRINGS ATTRACT ROAD DUST AND GRIT'

seen flats worn on the coils from rubbing inside the chromed seal holders. This causes a sort of 'flat violin' note when pumping these and similar BSA forks or even shrouded rear shocks. I have seen greased springs, but the grease attracts road dust and grit, so I'd prefer to assemble dry and endure the noise – it's generally inaudible when riding anyway.

Shrouds and headlight brackets make forks difficult to fit because you can only push the bottom slider, which (unhelpfully) telescopes. BSA made a puller that screws into the fork top nut thread, allowing you to draw the fork leg up from the top yoke with a spanner. I thought I was clever making my own tool to fit an Ariel, but wasted my time. Ariels are one of few British bikes where you can remove the top yoke without disturbing the steering head bearings. Remove the yoke and headlight brackets, then you can pull the forks up into the lower yoke easily and reassemble.



Free tools that have found a use and a new home in Rick's workshop

RICK'S FINAL WORD

These toolish things

We started fitting the new Renovation Spares mudguards to Lewis's Excelsior this month, but we also needed to address a problem I had noticed – the front forks were solid. Often caused by the front axle squeezing the fork bottoms out of parallel, removing the wheel didn't help so we took off the forks again.

Initially it looked like it was just that Lew had been a bit over-zealous with the paint, making the sliding tubes tight in the bushes. Wire-wheeling away the paint freed one side, but not the other – and closer inspection revealed a tiny dent in the outer tube that was obstructing passage of the fixed bush on the sliding tube. This was a bit tricky, as it was about six inches up the inside. I tried putting a round steel bar in the vice and using it as an anvil by sliding the tube over the top and hitting the outside of the dent with a flat hammer. That dealt with the dent and reduced the problem, but the fork was still notchy. We won't find new tubes, so now what?

Luckily, I was recently given an old flexible drive and with a Dremel grinding tool in the socket we were able to get far enough up inside to smooth the problem area and get it working properly. Phew!

And speaking of free tools, I was delighted to receive these BSA spanners (above) in a parcel from Mr Talbot of Leigh in Lancashire. He said he was 'loath to throw them in the scrap'. I'm very pleased he didn't – they are destined for a home in my 1928 Beeza's tool box. Thanks very much!



Central oil feed means the nuts can go anywhere on 500cc Triumphs

TWISTED NUTS

Dave White's fed up with hearing that his 1972 Triumph Daytona rocker boxes are on the wrong way round. "I've had the bike 15 years and whenever I strip the top end, I put the rocker boxes on the way that I first found them – with the domed nuts on the left. I know other bikes have them on the right, but put my mind at rest, Rick – does it matter?"

I don't think so, Dave. On most Triumphs these nuts secure the rocker oil-feed banjos and, coming from the oil tank, the pipe is fitted on the left of the bike. But on unit 500/350cc models, the supply goes through banjos in the middle of the box, feeding the rockers from the spindle centres, so the domed nuts can go anywhere – I've even seen two inlet (or exhaust) boxes fitted, with the nuts on opposite sides.

From new, the domed nuts were on the right to match the other models – and maybe the only reason for keeping it that way is that it gives a default to remind you which box was fitted where. It's not critical, but it is good practice to put them back where they came from. For that reason, Dave, if yours have been that way a long time, I would leave it that way.







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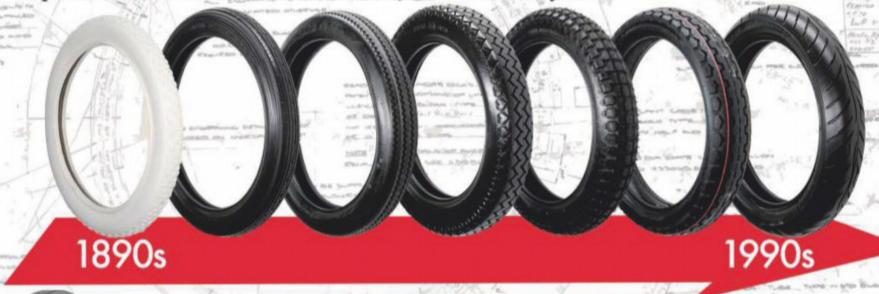
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Grand aspirations

Lewis Perry's Excelsior project takes a back seat in the *CB* Workshop this month as Rick helps mate Will Coleman to buy his dream bike for £1000. Here's how they began the process of restoring this Tiger to its natural habitat

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON

oney's the problem; old bikes are just too expensive for young people. Back in 1981, I was 17 and had £250 to spend; that bought me my first Triumph, a non-standard '61 5TA in bits.

'Mars bar economics' suggests about 400% inflation since 1980 – but when did you last see a realistic 500cc Triumph project for a grand?

Me neither, until now...

"Hi Rick! Ferret here," ricocheted the voice from the phone. "Guess what? I just bought another 1929 New Hudson! But I had to take a D1 Bantam, '57 Ajay 350 and a Tiger 100SS as well – they're all as rough as badgers' arses, but if you know anyone, £2500 the lot or will split!"

I instantly thought of my 24 yearold pal, Will. He's always liked Triumphs, but wasn't sure they were really for him – until he borrowed my '68 Trophy for the 2018 West Kent Run. He loved it, but couldn't afford one; maybe this was the answer. After discussion with his dad and brother, he came back to say they'd buy all three! "You do realise," he wryly observed, "you've now corrupted nearly my whole family!"

Always overshadowed by the 650s, Triumph's unit construction 500 has a lot going for it. Light, revvy and smooth, a well sorted 500 is great to ride and easy to live with. The problem is the bottom end – lack of oil changes or poor machining of a replacement bearing can lead to big-end failure. I rebuilt

ON STARTING THE STRIP, WE FOUND NO SEIZURE'

my 5TA three times before finding someone who machined the bush correctly in line with the other main bearing; if the crank tightens up when the cases are bolted up, it's wrong and all you can do is buy another bush and take it somewhere else. Nowadays I do it myself.

Will's 1962 Tiger 100SS last saw daylight sometime in the '80s.

Ferret warned it was 'seized, sort of' – the engine moved but locked when turned either way. But when we started the strip, we found no seizure – just a corroded valve stopping the piston. Better still, I doubt the engine's done 10,000 miles since a full rebuild. All it needed was a freshen up, new rings, gaskets, seals and bearings, plus a grind to remove slight wear on the main crank journal.

We're not looking for show finish – and I hate blasting abrasives into engines, so Will scrubbed the crustiness off the cases using wire wool and brass 'suede brushes' in my parts washer. After a degrease/paint strip in my caustic soda tub, the iron barrel got a few coats of 'barbecue' satin black spray paint.

I took Will to Rockerbox (01252 722973) to buy the parts because I trust what they sell and knew he'd appreciate the old-school shop as much as I do.

Pete Scopes at Brit Steel Classics in Dover (07707 845820, see page 36) offered to come and help Will put his engine back together. I'm always up for seeing how someone else tackles a rebuild; you can always learn something – and sure enough, when I was stumped by why the gears wouldn't select, Pete had the answer. The selector forks look similar but are actually handed and Pete spotted that they were misplaced. As a brand new camplate is fitted, we think the last owner replaced it to cure selection problems but muddled the forks on reassembly, making it worse. So that's why he stopped riding it. He'll be kicking himself if he reads this!

Will's delighted: "I knew how an engine works, but I'd never had one apart. I will feel much more confident riding the Triumph now I know it inside-out, and I really appreciate everyone's help!"

I'd say this is what it's all about – a bit of community effort to help out the next generation... •

GRINDING CRANKS WITH PLAIN BUSH BEARINGS

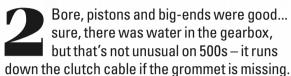


Unit 500/350cc Triumphs (and all BSA) twins) have a plain-bush right-side main bearing. These were sold in ten thou undersizes. Already at maximum -30, I suspect the last owner decided to refit it rather than find another crank. Since then, more sizes (up to -80) have become available, but you don't need to go down a full size. It's better to have the crank ground just enough to take off the wear, and machine the bush to suit, giving 'half sizes' that extend the crank's life. Modus Engineering in Crowborough, Sussex (01892 863600) restored Will's crank by removing just four thou.

PROJECT TIGER 100SS



On removing the head, Will found that the 'seizure' was simply one of the exhaust valves stuck open, otherwise the engine turned over smoothly. He's got a good buy!





A handy feature of these engines is a 'cartridge' gearbox that comes out in one piece without disturbing the gears – but little did we know all was not well here...



If an oil change ever reveals shiny flakes in the sump filter; stop riding – the big ends are breaking up and ready to seize. But there were no such problems here.



With the crankshaft out, the 'sludge trap' filter needs to be cleaned. Plug threads may be 'caulked' (threads locked by dot punch). Drill the burring away before removal.



It's worth doing. Sludge comes from dirty oil; 1000-mile changes prevent this kind of build-up. There's slight wear on the main journal but otherwise it's in fine shape.





Rockerbox in Farnham had all the parts we needed. They're engine builders, too, and only stock quality. Partsman Darrell clearly hated taking Will's hard-earned cash!



Pete and Will fitted new big-end shells and rebuilt the sludge trap as I bored the new bush to within reaming range of the crank diameter and fitted it to the crankcase.



Grease keeps swarf from oilways; it's washed out later. This reaming requires minute cuts and constant swarf clearing to avoid the blades digging in.



Extension pilot aligns the reamer through the opposite bearing – but the pilot's too big to fit, so I turned a larger-bore 'dummy bearing' from aluminium.



I also made a 'go/not go' gauge to check progress. Measured steps represent small increases in diameter – when the largest fits the bush, it's spot on.



Only the unit 350/500 engines allow you to fit the cams after the crankcases are joined – but don't forget to fit the engine breather disc/spring first.



The high gear bush extension had a wear groove from contact with the primary case oil seal; we pressed in a replacement which Will reamed to size.



Assembled, we couldn't engage the gears properly. Pete noticed the selectors were reversed; 'spot the difference'? There's an extra bit on one fork.



I gave Will an indicator-type oil pressure release valve, worthwhile on these engines; low pressure means bottom-end trouble on the way.



While Pete fitted the timing gears, I showed Will how to grind valves. He said: "Great; feels like I'm finally fixing the bit that stopped the engine working!"

PROJECT TIGER 100SS

Classic Workshop



Worth checking each piston ring's clearance with a feeler gauge; you want around four thou per inch of cylinder bore to avoid possible seizure.



Piston ring clamps keep the rings safely compressed while the barrel is lowered in place – but it's still ideally a two man job. Use plenty of oil.



Pete showed Will how to fit the valve springs – a dab of grease on the valve collets keeps the first in place while you fit the second.



We're fitting later-type pushrod tubes – they seal better. But you need to fit later tappet blocks or make seal-seating washers.



Paper rocker gaskets squeeze out – but using just 'instant gasket' can cause rocker/valve collar contact. See the shiny witness mark?



Pete finds that wire-reinforced gaskets shed strands into the oil, so he rates these copper gaskets (with RTV). But anneal and deburr them first...



Turn crank to level the pushrods and lower the box, lifting the rockers with the thumbs so you can feel them engaging with the pushrod ends.



Will's smile says it all. I loved my first Triumph

-they're great, and thanks to Pete and Ferret
I reckon Will's got a bright future ahead!



We'll be back on Lewis' Excelsior; we've got mudguards to fit and it's about time to see if we can get it running! See you then...

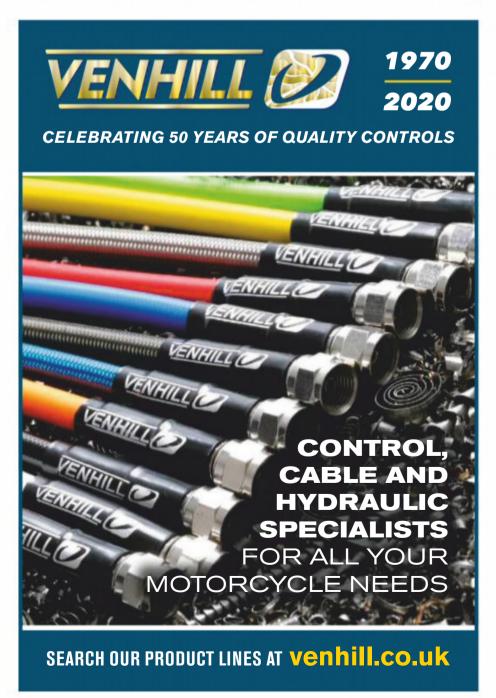
















Working from home

Chris Fisher loves vintage motorcycles. Working on them pays for his collecting habit – and his house is full of them. His engineering ability and a technical understanding way beyond his years means there's a waiting list for his services

WORDS: GARY PINCHIN PHOTOGRAPHY: GARY MARGERUM

hen you knock on someone's front door and he can't even prise it open because there's a flat-tank AJS right parked behind it in the hallway, it's obvious you're at the home of an obsessive.

We're at Chris Fisher's place to talk about his love of old bikes. Chris is just 27, but has already carved himself a name among the vintage motorcycle cognoscenti for two reasons. Firstly, for his brilliant engineering skills, which he employs in making new parts to keep 1920s/'30s machines running. And secondly for his in-depth understanding of how to rebuild engines, gearboxes and clutches for these old bikes to the highest standard.

When we finally gain entry to the lounge, we're met with some rather unorthodox 'ornaments'. The room is more like a garage – there's a 1915 293cc Allon (built by Alldays and Onions Motorcycles) that's been in the family since new, and a 1927 Cotton 350cc by the fireplace, with a Douglas and a Sunbeam parked under the front window. Boxes upon boxes of spares make it very difficult to actually sit on the sofa. In the dining room are his own Rex Acme and an AJS 1927 Big Port, along with a rare 1926 Parallel Model 8 Sunbeam that belongs to a customer.

Chris is beside himself: "I'm really, really sorry about the mess," he apologises. "It's hardly the image of someone who does precision engineering work, is it? I've got a prefab workshop ready to build across the back garden... at least I've dug the footings. We even had to take the door of the

garage off to get the mini-digger through. But thanks to the miserable weather this winter I've had no time to do it, so everything has been dumped in the house."

It's partly our fault for dumping this visit on Chris. It's been arranged at short notice because we've been so taken with what we've heard about the specialist work he does on vintage bikes. It's work that puts him right up there with the vastly experienced old hands in the vintage scene. The poor bloke hasn't had time to think about tidying up.

Chris has been surround by vintage bikes all his life. His great grandfather owned a Douglas (which Chris still has) and his dad rides one, too. But the difference is, Chris' entire life revolves around them. "My dad has a couple of vintage bikes, but he's more into his classics. He loves Bantams and has about 15 of the bloody things. But I must admit, I do also like them...

"I'm 27 now, but this all started for me when I was 14," he continues. "A friend of the family called John gave me a Model X34-0 BSA as a box of bits. It's a 1934 150cc bike and he said something like: 'If you can restore this, you can keep it'. So I did! Then, when I'd finished it, I went back to him and asked him if he'd mind me selling it to fund buying a Sunbeam. He told me to go ahead and do it. And that's what I continue do – buy projects, do them up and sell them. I'm not into shiny restorations."

Although Chris does carry out work on bikes for other vintage enthusiasts, it's not his day job. "I'm a CNC machinist,"



Machining components like this for vintage bikes is Chris' forté



Chris is a Douglas man. He loves the quality, performance and handling





he states. "At school I wanted to do law. Then I realised I didn't want to go to university, partly because of family circumstances at the time but also because of the debt going to university would involve. I liked the idea of being out in the workplace, 'learning and earning'. I thought: 'Get out, get a job and get on with life!' I chose engineering.

"I did an apprenticeship of sorts at South Cerney Engineering. They do classic and vintage car work. I left there and ended up at Fiennes Restoration, a pre-war Rolls-Royce and Bentley specialist firm; I had a go on their CNC machines. They work on things like the 7.6-litre Phantoms and produce things like brand new heads and cylinders.

"Now, though, I work for a company called Metalite in Swindon, who make tooling for injection moulding. We work in microns; accuracy is paramount. The boss there is really good to me and lets me use the machines at weekends, so what I can't do in my own shed I can do on their machinery."

"I'm lucky enough to earn something doing vintage bike stuff to pay for my hobby. I've always wanted to keep this as a hobby, so I'll never taken on complete bike builds or restorations, except for myself. I'll do engines, gearboxes and clutches for other people, but at the moment I have to tell people there is a waiting list – I've got that much on."

His garage is rammed with more bikes, which all share space with a Bridgeport mill, lathe and surface grinder – and plenty of specialist tools. Chris sits on one of his bikes – and his comments are revealing: "It's a 1928 AJS K7. I've not owned it long – just two months, actually. It's period-correct but not matching numbers, although that's not something that bothers me. The bike is still the bike, so it doesn't matter. In 1927 AJS entered the TT with their first cammy engine; for 1928 they went back with their overhead cam and built

LUCKILY, MY VINTAGE BIKE WORK PAYS FOR MY HOBBY

an overhead-cam proddie racer too – this is one of them. It's the only overhead-cam flat-tanker they did. In 1929 they went to a bulbous saddle tank design. I think there was only 20 of this K7 model in the world... but don't quote me. It's rated at 2¾ horsepower, with a power output of 15bhp. It's got a top speed of 70-75mph. The bike is as I bought it, but it's got a gearbox problem and jumps out of second gear. There are some new wheel bearings on the way for it, too."

So has Chris inherited all the machines and tools in the garage? "No, I bought all of my machines from a chap near Wantage. They're all very similar to those I used during my apprenticeship." He has some work lined up on the Bridgeport during our visit: "I made some of these mainshafts [for Sunbeam crankshaft assemblies] on the CNC at work but now need to mill the keyway."

We also spot a new replacement wheel spindle that Chris has produced. "Set up correctly, a cup-and-cone wheel spindle can last a lifetime – but the set-up is the key," he says. "With the ones I make, the bearings are sealed to keep the grease in. Originality is one thing, but making the bike useable is what it's all about for me. Thing is, if you try to fit new balls to the old spindle with damaged bearing faces, it's never going to run well. My spindles allow the wheel to spin freely, so they are more efficient than the worn old spindles. I reverse-engineered this new one – I took measurements off the old spindle, then created a new one using 15mm bearings. Where are you going to find new Imperial bearings? You can find metric bearings anywhere.

"I've welded crankcases and re-machined them. I've machined cases from solid billet, too – there's a lot of swarf.



ABOVE:Chris
produces his own
wheel spindles with
sealed bearings
(top) to replace the
cup-and-cone
vintage originals

RIGHT: Doesn't everyone have a Douglas in the boudoir?

BELOW: The standard of Chris' engineering work speaks for itself







BELOW: Sunbeam is another of his preferred marques, with club membership on the 'to do' list RIGHT: One of the work-in-progress engines at Chris' place during our visit to his house







ABOVE: Chris has a Bridgeport mill, lathe and surface grinder to play with in his garage, where he can machine parts made in the CNC machine at work









but it's a far easier and more cost-effective way of creating a crankcase than having a casting specially made. I was quoted £250 for a casting, but £2500 for the pattern. It costs £250 for the lump of metal to put in a CNC, but of course you still have the costs of the machining itself to take into account. It's probably two days to machine a set of cases, so it it's difficult to put a price on that."

His customers, he says, tend to be the kind of elder gentleman you would expect to own vintage iron – but that's not always the case. "I think I've one guy in his early forties, but otherwise that's it. However, my dad does bits and pieces for other people and he's got some young lads with Bantams that he helps out. It would be great to get more younger people into vintage bikes, though."

There's a Scott propping the garage door open and Chris gives us a little history lesson: "The original works 600 finished third in the 1928 TT. This is the 1929 Scott TT Replica – a 600cc liquid-cooled two-stroke. I've owned it for five years. It needed an engine rebuild when I bought it. I've done a couple for customers, too

- they are very simple engines, but they're time-consuming because they take so much setting up. Scotts are so fussy, but they're brilliant when you have them set up right. There were only 250 Replicas made and they produced 16bhp as they came out of the factory. Mine produces 40bhp, so it's a rapid bit of kit. Very few of my bikes are standard, as they would have come out of the factory. This one needs a gearbox putting back in it. And it needs a new magneto. I bought it because my other Scott needed the correct engine. I'll sell this one at some stage."

The question is, though, why the passion for owning, riding and fettling vintage bikes – especially as there's a modern Triumph here, among a gaggle bikes of that are

almost 100 years old? He replies: "I've got one modern bike, this Triumph Tiger. It's a fantastic bike. Much as I love vintage motorcycles, I do to like to get out on this and ride it with purpose – especially if I'm riding with friends. But vintage bikes, to me, are proper motorcycles. They are light, nimble and go well for what they are – especially when you remember that in the 1920s they had just shrugged off the bicycle. These bikes have no pedals and tend to have overhead-valve engines; it's like they're the first fully-developed motorcycles – and they look fast standing still!

"They are brilliant to ride. Take my Douglas for example. I've got the footpegs on the floor all the time when I ride it. The one in the hallway with no engine – it needs a rebuild

– is a 1928 SW5, and was my great grandad's. He bought it in the early 1950s. He was actually a Douglas-sponsored rider – not a full works rider, but one of the privateers that they helped in reliability trials.

"Vintage bikes can be a pain, of course they can – but it all depends on what you ride and where you ride. If I intend to

ride in Scotland on the fast, open roads there, then I take my Douglas. If it's a slower run, I'll take my overhead-cam AJS. You pick the appropriate bike. People who organise runs tend to pick the right roads anyway. But I also tend to ride a fair bit on my own locally or with friends, so I ride whatever that suits. I do Sunbeam-registered rides, too – I'm not a member of the club yet, but I intend to join. I just love the sort of events they organise where it's all pre-war bikes."

Another one of the bikes living in Chris' workshop during our visit is a 500cc Sunbeam 1931 Model 9. "It's just a good old Model 9," he says. "The Model 9 is a very popular bike within the Sunbeam club. They never made any bikes in massive numbers. Where BSA were making thousands

ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Old special tools and the modern means to get engineering calculations just right. Doesn't everyone have a Douglas and a Sunbeam parked under the window in their front room? Chris is a dab hand with the Bridgeport. Mainshaft made by Chris on a CNC machine - the next step is to mill the keyway



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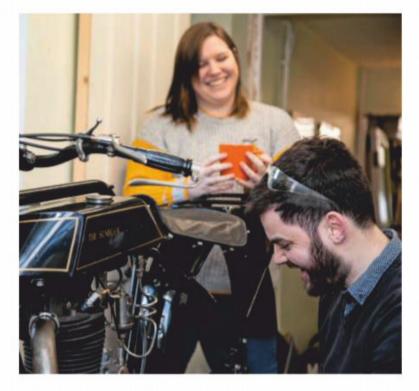












a week in the 1920s, Sunbeam were making maybe 20 a week, but production was so focused on quality. People knew that and were prepared to pay for it."

The other bike is a 1927 Douglas 600EW. "This is the 600cc engine; Douglas did a 350 version, too. The 600 was primarily for sidecar work. I've owned this one for 18 months and it's fantastic bike to ride. It's not that fast; it's not that kind of bike. It does about 55mph tops, but it'll go anywhere. Get to a hill, wind it on and it just keeps going. They handle

well anyway, thanks to the duplex frames and all that weight being low down.

"I'm a Douglas man. I love 'em, especially the racer I own [the previously mentioned one, sat under the front living room window]. It's an SW6 600cc – originally a 600 speedway model, but I put road tyres on it. Why Douglas? Partly because of the family connection; as I

said, my dad has one and my great grandfather had one. They go like the clappers, are built well and handle well. Plus they are relatively rare."

We go back into the house. Chris has some work to do on a customer's Sunbeam that's housed in what was originally built as a utility room off the kitchen, but is currently an overflow space for more bikes until the new workshop is built. Girlfriend Heidi brings him a cuppa. "She's brilliant," says Chris. "She puts up with a lot, for sure."

It turns out that Heidi is mad keen on bikes, too. She's got eyes on her dad's Guzzi for herself. She was due to take her bike test the week after our visit and hopes to get a

chance to ride one of Chris' flat-tankers. However, she's also into modern bike sport and one of her prized possessions is a Valentino Rossi replica helmet.

The customer's bikes in the utility room are both Sunbeams – there's a 1932 500cc Model 9 flat-tanker and a 1937 600cc Model 9A in there. Chris says one has to be delivered back to its owner in London later that afternoon – and he insists that it will be finished as soon as we've left. So is there any work that Chris can't or won't do on a bike? "I don't do

magnetos or paint. And I won't do restorations. I'm not interested. I'm unofficially 'Chris Fisher Engineering'. I'm not even into fabrication."

There's a timing case lying on the side of the workbench. "That's a Sunbeam 9A timing cover," he explains. "I've machined the casing and fitted new bearings. The crank bush includes an

oil supply to the big-end. I refaced the cam followers, welded them up and reprofiled them. I also welded up the cams, but sent them to a friend up in Scotland to get them reprofiled. I could even recreate the original timing case on a CNC machine if need be...

"When I do an engine, I don't think the people realise the effort that's gone into it. It's not just machining. You have to shim everything to get the end-float right. It's a process of getting every tolerance just so, to get the engine running as efficiently as possible. That's the fun with these vintage machines—getting them to run properly. Only then are you able to enjoy the full potential of the bike."

ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: 1915 293cc Allon lives in the front room. A 1929 Scott TT Replica - Chris reckons they're fussy, but great when set up properly. Girlfriend Heidi provides tea and support as Chris works on a Sunbeam in the utility room. A modern Triumph Tiger is also on his fleet, but his heart's in vintage bikes





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OUR CLASSICS



RIGHT: Mark's enjoying taking his time when it comes to fettling his Triumph T140V

A change of pace

New CB recruit Mark explains why he's enjoying the transition from a 1000cc Japanese sports bike to a '70s British twin

WORDS: GEZ KANE PHOTOGRAPHY: STUART COLLINS



MARK SUTTON

Meet the newest addition to the CB club. Mark, 28, works at SRM Engineering in Aberystwyth and he'll be giving us regular updates on his Triumph Bonneville T140V from now on...

MARK owns a 2003 Suzuki GSX-R1000, but the bike that increasingly lights his fire is a 1978 Triumph T140V Bonneville. How did that happen?

"When I was a kid, both my dad and step-dad had bikes," Mark explains. "But it was when my dad bought a Hinckley Bonneville that I really started to take an interest. I'd just turned 17 – and once dad got the Bonnie I had to have a bike myself. Within a year, I'd passed my test and a Honda CB500 was my first 'big' bike. I loved every minute of being on two wheels and didn't bother taking my car test until a year or two ago."

That explains the bike thing maybe, but it was getting a job in the stores at classic bike specialists SRM that led to Mark blasting round the mid-Wales roads on a

Bonneville more than twice his age. He was instantly surrounded by British bikes at work, although he still didn't think he'd ever own one. All that changed when Classic Bike's Rick Parkington spent a few days at SRM for a technical feature last year. So it's all *his* fault.

One of SRM's co-owners, Jon Jolley, fills me in. "While I was chatting to Rick, he mentioned he'd been trying to get some younger riders down his way into the classic thing. I told him about Mark and introduced them. The next thing I knew, Rick was asking Geoff and I if there was a bike knocking about that Mark could 'take over'. We had this T140 that had been here for ages; we'd quoted for an engine rebuild when it first came in, but the owner didn't want to spend the money on it, so we bought it. We intended to sort it out and sell it on, but we've been too busy with customer work since. We agreed that Mark could have it and pay for it 'as and when' - as long as he did all the work on it."

Mark was delighted. "I'd been chatting to Rick and he'd realised how much I love bikes. I couldn't wait to get started on sorting out the Triumph. I had to, though, •



RICK PARKINGTON 1928 Sunbeam 1936 Rudge Ulster 1968 Triumph TR6 Lots of other junk



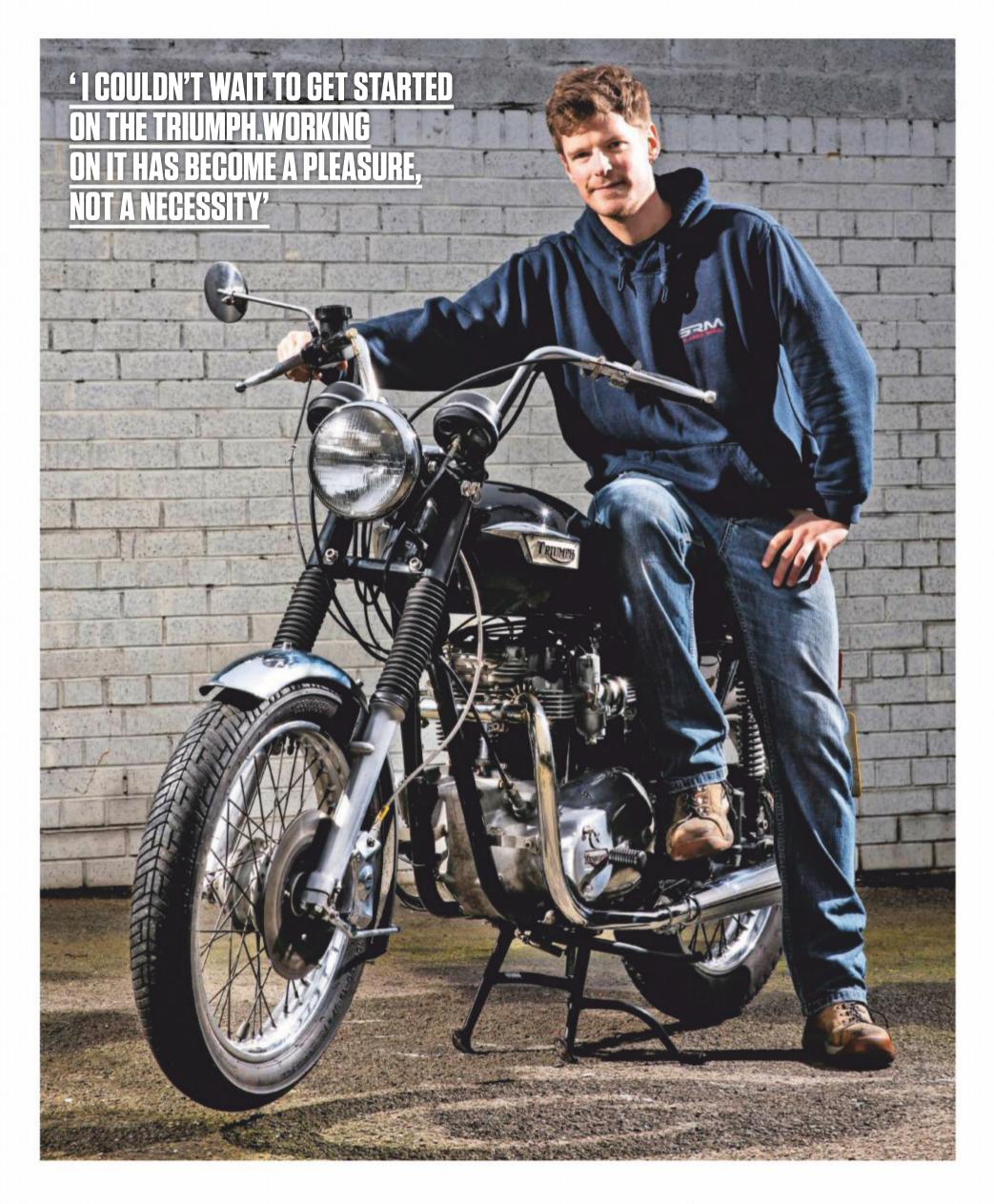
RUPERT PAUL 1960 Royal Enfield Meteor Minor



MARK HOLMES 1975 Moto Guzzi T3

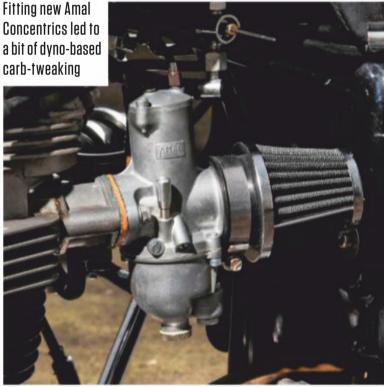


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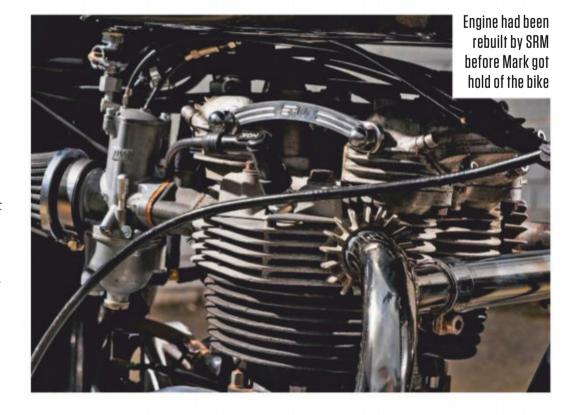


as I'd just come off my Suzuki and had to get that back on the road. I've always worked on the Suzuki myself – there aren't too many bike shops round here even if I didn't want to – but once I got started on the Triumph I realised just how different it was to work on."

The T140 was something of a mixed bag. SRM had rebuilt the engine – it had originally arrived with the main bearings shot – but the rest of the bike was a mess. "The brakes didn't work, the exhaust had been bodged on with metric fasteners, it had cheap aftermarket carbs, the chainguard was rotten and everything was filthy. But it ran – and it was mine. I was a British bike owner."

With his Suzuki back on the road, Mark had time to savour the pleasures of fettling the Triumph. "It's great to be able to take my time working on the bike," he says. "Working on it has become a pleasure, not a necessity. I'm doing more stuff that I wouldn't have taken on before – and loving it. It's definitely more engaging and satisfying to work on – and I get support and advice from Jon and the rest of the team at work.

"Rebuilding the brakes and getting the carburettors









sorted have been the most difficult jobs so far. The back brake was seized solid, with jelly-like goo all over it. It turned out there was no O-ring fitted to the rear brake reservoir – the fluid had leaked out over everything and gummed it up. I rebuilt the calipers and fitted new seals. Getting the pistons out defeated me at first – until Jon showed me how to pop them out using an air gun. I was going to split the calipers – like I'd done on my Suzuki – but Jon saved me a lot of time and effort there.

"I fitted brand new Amal Concentrics, rather than chasing faults round the old carbs. But I still had a few problems getting the bike to run right – and tick over reliably. Swapping the pilot jets helped the tickover issue, but dirt kept getting through to the float bowl. It helped being able to use the SRM dyno to get it set up right.

"The rest of what I've done so far is mainly cosmetic. I've replaced all the worn and perished rubbers, fitted new, pattern Norton peashooter silencers and fabricated the mounting brackets to suit them. Other than that, it's been a bit of paint and polish, a new chain and a good service, really. I don't want a concours bike, just something that looks nice and is good to ride."

Ah, riding. Just how does the Triumph feel out on the road compared to his big Suzuki? "Before I rode it, I tried not to build up my expectations too much. But I've been shocked – in a good way – at how good the riding experience is. I thought the gearbox might feel a bit crude after my modern bikes, but it's lovely. I love the way the engine pulls in the midrange, too. And, as for the sound... If I'm honest, it's been a real eye-opener – so much better than I thought it would be. I've had my fill of performance. The GSX-R is fun to ride, but the Bonnie makes you think more about your riding. It's more involving and relaxing. It's wicked.

"I absolutely love the Triumph. I'd have been wary of buying one 'off the street'. I've seen so many 'rebuilt' engines at work that have been nightmares. But knowing the engine has been rebuilt here gives me the confidence of knowing it's been done right. Maybe next winter I'll have a go at lifting the heads and barrels to check them over and repaint the barrels. I want to spray the tank and side panels and fit indicators. I'll be looking for somewhere to live that's got a garage or shed, so I can work on the Triumph at home, too. First, though, I want to ride it more and enjoy it. Roll on spring."

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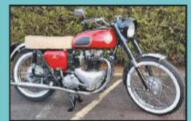
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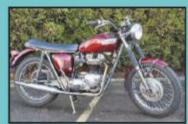
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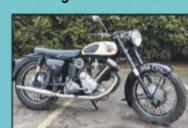
1947 BSA M21 600cc Girder/Rigid Bargain £4995



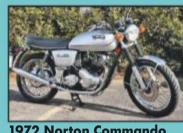
1963 Norton 650SS Matching Restored ... £8950



1973 Triumph TR6R 650cc Matching£4795



1961 Panther M120 650cc Very Original£6950



1972 Norton Commando 750 Electric Start £9450



1965 Pannonia T5 250cc Restored......£3750



1975 Triumph Trident T150 750cc Racer.....£6995



1978 Yamaha RD200 Restored......£2950



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BIKES FOR SALE

AJS 31 650CC 1960 Bike in good condition, owned by me for 19 years £4300 TEL: 07808 83931 NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

ARIEL SQUARE FOUR 1954

MK2, completely rebuilt to mint condition with recommended owners club upgrades, too much to list £12000 TEL: 01873 811670 WALES

ARIEL SWINGING ARM Hub in good condition, includes bearings and spindle, plus p&p £70 TEL: 01539 562171 LANCASTER

BMW R75 RT ULTIMA 1996

Abandoned project, in large chunks, sound motor gearbox and final drive, decent bodywork, call me anytime £750 TEL: 07989 364330 HUDDERSFIELD

BMW R75/5 Short Wheel Base

1972 First Registered UK 1989, engine and gearbox rebuilt by Scriminger, frame powder coated, wheels rebuilt with s/spoke, just needs assembling £4000 TEL: 07854 080920 SALTBURN BY THE SEA

BMW R90S 1975 Smoke black/ silve R90S, truly excellent condition, comprehensively serviced and refreshed, new paint, tyres, ingition, wheels and carbs rebuilt, plus much more £10200 TEL: 07887 726295 LICHFIELD

BSA B31 350CC 1956 Bike has been laid up for over a year, will require recommisionning, V5 in my name £3200 TEL: 07917 021713 EDINBURGH

BSA BANTAM MAJOR 1955

150cc, grey and cream plunger model, old buff log book, V5C, on SORN, in running order, everything works as it should, could deliver at cost £2250 TEL: 01268 735135 ESSEX

BSA FLEET STAR 1972 B25

250CC, engine stripped for inspection, also some electrical and cycle parts from same oil in fram bike £250 ONO TEL: 07929 474735 YORKSHIRE

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DUCATI 900SS 1981 30000 miles, genuine original 900ss, superb, engine so good you can ride it home, rare spares included £24500 TEL: 01254 467510 DEVON

FRANCIS BARNET CRUISER 80

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HARLEY DAVIDSON DYNA FXDL 2001 Stunning,
immaculate bike 1450cc,
beautiful perfect machine, black

and chrome £10000 TEL: 01242

620363 GLOUCESTERSHIRE



BSA STAR 1964

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Full restoration 3 years ago, included new m/x tyres, road registered, owes me £4700 will accept offers circa £3500, buyer to pay freight TEL: 01481 255486 GUERNSEY



GREEVES SCOTTISH 1960

Excellent condition, has been part of collection for many years, an older restoration with no expense spared, great collectable piece of motorcycle history £3250 TEL: 07973 543975



HONDA CB400A 1981

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BSA STARFIRE 1968

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BSA SUPERROCKET 650 1961

Matching engine and frame number, original transferable registration number, great clssic in good condition £5500 TEL: 01737 423871 SURREY



DUCATI 900SS 1982

Genuine bike, repainted to 96 colours/spec, original Conti exhaust, good runner, more details and photos at www.anthonygodin.co.uk £27995 TEL: 01622 814140/07769 970559 KENT (T)



HARLEY DAVIDSON WLC 45 1942

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HONDA CB550 FOUR KO 1974

15000 miles, excellent condition and runs superb, new maroon paint otherwise all original including exhaust £3500 TEL: 07521 937850 YORKSHIRE



BSA THUNDERBOLT 1966

Anolder restoration sitll in excellent condition, starts and runs fine, a chance to own this lovely biriths classics, American spec but never exported £5550 TEL: 07979 428059 NORTHANTS



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Engine will be rebuilt/lightened, new pistons/bores, uprated front Bremo calipers/discs, hand made tank with beautiful Cobalt blue metal flake paint, handmade leather seat, very special bike £ 19995 TEL: 07506 427705



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Single seater with boot, rear luggage rack, wire wheel, lights, leather seat, tuono cover, dry stored inside, 30mm fittings, was fitted to a Tonti frame, offers over £2000 TEL: 07899 778006 HIGHLANDS



HONDA CL450 1971

Excelent condition, new tyres, low mileage £4500 TEL: 07967 856912



BULTACO 250 MK7 PURSANG 1973

Matching numbers, spare engine MX wheels, currently in hillclimb trim, mx sprockets included, unused since rebore, pistons and seals, chard area £3250 TEL: 01460 220218 SOMERSET



DUCATI S4R 996 2003

15127 miles, belts and shims oil and filter just done, new clutch, tyres, chain and sprockets, good condition £4200 TEL: 07804 945884 WEST MIDLANDS



HONDA 400/4 1976

Garaged from new, owned by same family from 6 months old, 3200 miles, originally unrestored last on road 1980, serviced and MoT' Oct 2016, not used since £5000 TEL: 01782 316943 STAFFORDSHIRE



HONDA CL450 1971

Excellent condition, new tyres, low mileage £4500 TEL: 07967 856912



BULTACO PURSANG 1973

Nut and bolt rebuild, alloy tai

Nut and bolt rebuid, alloy tank, electric ignition, too many new parts to list £4125 ONO TEL: 07715 280436



DUCATI SR4 996 2003

15127 miles, belt and shims oil and filter just done, 1000 miles, since new dutch, tyres, chain and sprockets, mature enthusiast owner, good condition, MoT, call for details of work done £4200 OVNO TEL: 07804 945884 WEST



HONDA 750 FOURK 1978

Genuine 13000 miles, fantastic condition, runs great, serviced, good to go, no road tax/MoT needed £5250 ONO TEL: 07803 579913 CUMBRIA



HONDA RC181 HAILWOOD REPLICA 600/4 1976

One off RC181 frame, ally tank, 4ls front brake, CRMC reg £9895 TEL: 07956 637512 KENT

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T120 1969



Andy Est. 1972	Tiernan
1937 AJS 2A 990cc V-twin long term ownership both books	1955/61 NORTON ES2 500cc choice of 2
1961 ARIEL LEADER 250cc presentable	1954 PANTHER 100 600cc telerigid bike shop's hack
1954/1955 ARIEL NH 350cc choice of 3	1938 PANTHER 100 600cc lovely prewar bike
1957/58 ARIEL VH 500cc choice of 2	1959 PANTHER 120 650cc nice big pussy
1936 BSA B2 250cc OHV lovely prewar model	1957 RATIER L7/8 750cc boxer ex French police
1960/62 BSA C15 250cc choice of 2	1940 ROYAL ENFIELD K 1140cc one of the last made
1954 BSA C10L 250cc pretty machine	1938 RUDGE RAPID 250cc smart full history
1939 BSA B24 350cc silver star OHV	1950 SCOTT SQUIRREL 596cc last of the Yorkshire Scotts £8,000
1938 BSA B26 350cc smart good value	1965 SCOTT 596cc nice Birmingham model
1928 BSA S28 500cc fine vintage £9,850 1932 BSA W6 500cc smart local machine £8,000	1955 TRIUMPH TERRIER 150cc lovely oily rag£3,650
1944 BSA WM20 500cc old war horse! £7,500	1956/59/60 TRIUMPH TIGER CUB 200cc choice of 3 £4,350/£4,000/£3,000
1948 BSA A7 500cc early long stroke	1921 TRIUMPH JUNIOR 225cc beautiful vintage lightweight £5,350
1921 BSA Model A 770cc nice old V-twin	1939 TRIUMPH T80 350cc sporty bike
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1000 CDUTCO LO CO CC O CO	1914 TRIUMPH 4HP 550cc beautiful example

1954 VELOCETTE KSS Special 250cc lightweight cammy...

1966/67 VELOCETTE LE 200cc choice of 2...

1962 NORTON NAVIGATOR 350cc lovely looking bike. .. £3,750 1947 VELOCETTE MAC 350cc older restorati £5,650 See website for current list. Email: andybuysbikes@hotmail.com www.andybuysbikes.com GOOD PRICES PAID Old Railway Station, Station Road, Framlingham, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 9EE.

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1951 Vincent Rapide



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1948 BSA B32 Comp. Trials £7,995



£11,495



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1971 BSA Thunderbolt £6,495



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1967 Triumph T120R Bonneville £11,495



1973 Triumph T150V Trident £8,495



1974 Norton Commando 850 MKIIa Inter £8,995



1970 Norton Commando



1929 Norton Model 18 £27,995



1954 Norton Dominator Model 7 £6,749



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Brough Pendine S Available

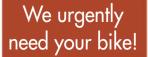


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Custom blue, excellent condition £3000 TEL: 01242 620363 **GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

HONDA C90 1971 Red/white two previous owners, 3700 miles from new, totally original probably the best, original left in the country you wouldnt find better £3495 TEL: 07902 419183

HONDA CB250 1970 Model K1 red/white tank, engine ok, has stood in dry garage for 12 months, so may need carb clean, new tyres £3500 OVNO TEL: 01702 294289 SOUTHEND ON SEA

HONDA CBX1000 1991 132 miles, as new condition, bike has been stored in a hallway since 1991, no blemishes, bike runs lovely , all keys £3999 TEL: 07740

922604 SUFFOLK **HONDA DREAM 50CC Rare** limited edition collectors item, 1997 but brand new, unregistered part of a private collection, this fabulous machine mimics the 1962 works, OHC

HONDA HORNET 900 2003 FAIRING Please call £25 TEL: 07543 990532 MID GLAMORGAN

racers £6300 ONO TEL: 01522

703687 LINCOLN

HONDA SS50 1969 Great condition, runs very well, lots of money spent, great little clasic bike £2995 TEL: 07909 953124

HONDA VF750F 1984 Painted frame, new tyres, excellent bodywork, tank etc, 1 owner from new, 15000 miles, v5 present, all there £595 ONO TEL: 01513 428838 WIRRAL

HONDA VF750FD 1983

Motorcycle and sidecar in matching blue, 28300 miles, good condition, goes well, 11 months MoT £4595 TEL: 07913 40062 ESSEX

HONDA VT500E 1985 Two bikes, both C reg, new oil and filters, very underrated shaft drive, no garage so needs finishing off for MoT £1000 TEL: 07845 241548 EAST SUSSEX

KAWASAKI Z900 A4 Fantastic bike in very nice condition, Must be seen, manufactured in 1976. more details and photos at www.barnfieldsclassics.co.uk £9,989 TEL: 07970 007775 ESSEX

MATCHLESS G3L 1955 New

tyres and seat, new wiring loom, lights and switches, just had fully recon dynamo and regulator, new cables clutch and brake £1950 TEL: 07791 883345 DEVON

MATCHLESS G3LS 1957 Verv nice condition, matching engine frame gearbox, numbers certificate of authenticity from owners club, many new parts £3600 TEL: 07738 265351 GLOS



HONDA REPLICA 1972 Built by Bob Peck, hailwood replica, 600/4 water cooled electric start, parade racer immcaculate CRMC registered £10250 TEL: 07368 304077 STAFFORDSHIRE



JAMES COMET 1952

2000 miles, all original and rebuilt, matching numbers and original 1952 reg with V5C, old log book and handbook, girder forks rigid frame single seat £2250 TEL: 01376 34559 ESSEX



KAWASAKI Z650 1978

Stunning unrestored original conditon, only 10000 miles from new, imported from USA in 2006, new chain, sprockets, tyres, battery, runs as good as it looks £6995 TEL: 01335 370610 DERBYSHIRE



LAVERDA SF2 1975

Beautiful classic under 18000 miles, witt ignition, new battery, new Brembo calipers, lots of stainless, please contact for more info £7000 TEL: 07938 168468



MONTESA COTA 247CC 1972

Full nut and bolt restoration, NOS chrome parts sourced from Spain, original engine, frame tank, wheels and forks, ideal for classic trials £2000 TEL: 07813 54791 SCOTLAND



Only 9000 miles since total restoration, £7k spent, original British import with MPH speedo and Odyssey PC680 battery, good reliable runer, offers over £4500 £4500 TEL: 01588 505065 SHROPSHIRE



MONTESA MH123 1984

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NORTON 500 INTER 1939

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JAMES COMET L1 1956

Lovely British classic restored to original conditon, engine rebuilt, runs well, 98cc Villiers 2 speed, V5 present, great intro bike can be used with CBT £1800 ONO TEL: 07851 802980 KENT



MATCHLESS 350 G3 1955

Good condition, new tyres fitted, indicators and rear stainless steel rack also fitted, good usabke bike £3900 TEL: 07591 134791



MOTO GUZZI LE MANS 2 1981

Stainless exhaust, all black parts powder coated, stock standard, original bill of sale £7750 TEL: 01805 624990 TORRINGTON



NORTON COMMANDO 750 1970

Fastback good condition, new tyres, t/l/s, front brake, hagon shocks, mileage showing 32000, green logbook, V5C, original registration, offers considered £6950 TEL: 01723 372219 SCARBOROUGH



JOSHI H54T 1955

Two stroke twin port, near original bike docs ect £1895 TEL: 01538 753086 STAFFORDSHIRE



MATCHLESS G3L/C 1957

Two owners from new, succesful trials bike, alloy wheels and tank 1 1/8" forks, sls brakes, new rear tyre and monobloc log book available TEL: 01425 674300 DORSET



NORTON COMMANDO 850 MK2A INTERSTATE

Nice clean example, previously restored, more details and photos at www.anthonygodin.co.uk £8995 TEL: 01622 814140/07769 970559 KENT (T)



NORTON ES2 500CC 1961

For details please call or visit www.andybuysbikes.com £6750 TEL: 07802 896114 SUFFOLK (T)



KAWASAKI KH400 1979

VGC, runs well, original handbook and tool kit £7500 TEL: 07977 857383 SOUTH YORKSHIRE



KAWASAKI KZ1100 SHAFT DRIVE 25000 miles, absolutely mint with

genuine paint and seat cover, toolkit and handbook, totally overhauled/ serviced with all new genuine parts, air suspension perfect, Delkevic 4-1 exhaust, viewing esse £6495 ONO TEL: 07506 427705



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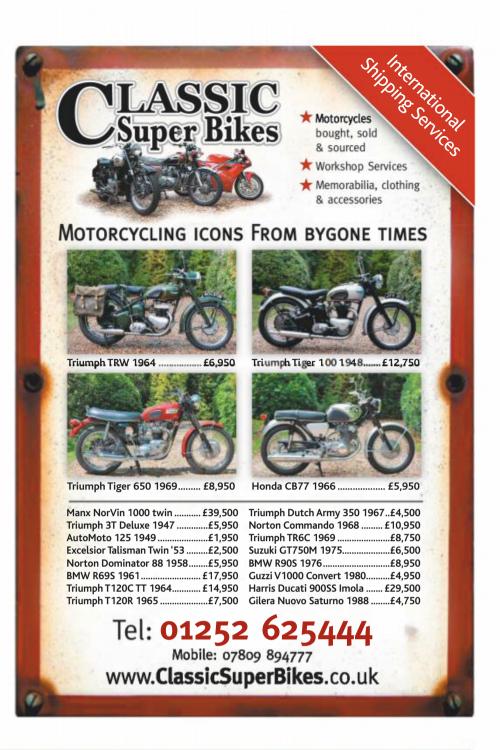
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Ducati 900SS 1980. V nice £25,000



Bimota SB2, restored and



Laverda SFC replica, triple discs, long tank, excellent



Ducati 750 sport 1974, V good £35,950



Moto Guzzi V7 sport, restored and absolutely lovely £14,950



Ducati 750 Fully restored by us £54,950



Ducati 750SS Replica, complete new build by us £45,000

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Aprilia 6.5 Starck, low	miles V good £4,50 0
Aprilia 6.5 Starck, oran	nge and lovely£3,950
Bimota DB4, low miles	V good£7,500
Bimota DB5, low miles	fantastic£11,950
Bimota YB10, new	£11,000
Ducati 900SS 1975, ex	cellent£38,950

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MOTO MORINI STRADA 1983

Bike is in lovely condition, runs really well, no faults, electric start £3800 TEL: 01427 788167 LINCS

PUCH M50 SPORT 1975 2

owner, matching numbers, red starts and runs, low mileage, needs some TLC but all there \pounds 1000 TEL: 07913 508245 BEDFORDSHIRE

ROYAL ENFIELD 350 Model G, 1 owner, buff log books and history £2850 TEL: 07932 647250 ESSEX

ROYAL ENFIELD BULLET 350CC

1954 Redditch built maroon paintwork, period alloy rims, excellent chrome twin, front brake previous long term ownership, original restoration, green logbook and V5C ready to ride £3500 TEL: 01723 372219 SCARBOROUGH

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1963 Consider part exchange for any Triumph twin, basket case cash either way £3000 ONO TEL: 01789 266671 COVENTRY

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1955 Polymatic blue, matching numbers, 12 volts, unleaded, head restored to showroom condition, not been ridden since restoration in 2019 £10495 TEL: 01424 272283 SUSSEX

TRIUMPH T10C 1963 Please call £1000 TEL: 01933 355796

TRIUMPH T110 1961 Original, v good cond, kingfisher blue/silver bathtub model, lovely ex showbike £10750 TEL: 07932 647250

TRIUMPH TRIDENT T150 1973

4 speed engine mag wheels new tyres, later clock pod, stainless steel silencers, boyer £5750 TEL: 07941 388317 CLEVELAND

YAMAHA FJ1200 1991 BRAKE CALLIPERS Please call £50 TEL: 07543 990532 MID GLAMORGAN

YAMAHA RD400C FROM 1976

New paint to petrol tank and side covers. This bike starts and runs great project. More details and photos at

www.barnfieldsclassics.co.uk £3,950 TEL: 07970 007775 ESSEX (T)

YAMAHA TX 250 1977 Twin shock engine rebuild, electronic ignition, new shocks, rechromed forks, silencer, footrest, levers, cables, lighting kit, registered, ready for trials trail £1995 TEL: 01283 509381 STAFFORDSHIRE



PARILLA 125CC 1961 MODEL 125SP, low mileage, original condition, UK reg TEL: 07815 55907 STAFFORD



SUZUKI M12 SUPERSPORTS 50CC 1965

Immaculate Suzuki M12, one of the best example available, everything works as it should, uk registered with V5, well worth viewing, bargain price £2500 TEL: 07899 756303 WALES



TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE T140V 1976

Superb condition with 12000 miles, fully recommissioned, standard except electronic ignition, has original Dunlop rims and Meriden exhausts, excellent paintwork and chrome £6995 TEL: 07964 175072 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



VELOCETTE LE 1958

Signal red, beautiful condition, 27 miles since rebuild, including rewire, new carb, batt, tyres, seat, panniers etc, bargain £1950 TEL: 07798 770178 NORTH YORKSHIRE



ROYAL ENFIELD 250 CRUSADER 1964

VGC, blue/black off road, SORN, owned for many years, very little work needed to get back on road £2000 ONO TEL: 07828 087684 KENT



SUZUKI SB200 1985

22732 miles, in metallic blue, great condition for age with 11 months MoT, lock and haynes manual included £1395 ONO TEL: 07707 040280



TRIUMPH T110

In bonneville spec 1962, engine rebuild, completely respray, duplex frame, slicshift gearbox, easy starter, lovely runner, preunite, excellent condition, lovely bike TEL: 07855 389464



VELOCETTE MAC 350CC 1948

Rigid with iron engine, new tyres, rebuilt magneto and speedometer, recent oil change and rewire, oily rag condition TEL: 07894 468100 DEVON



SUZUKI BANDIT GSF 600 1997

2 owners, genuine 8437 miles, SORNED since 7/2014, MoT's to prove, now recommisioned, new battery, filters, plugs, oil, MoTd 10/20, ready to use £1050 ONO TEL: 01289 303077 NORTHUMBERLAND



SUZUKI T500M

In very good condition, originally a canadian import ut now registered in UK and with UK registration, in good original condition and runs well about 2500 rpm, no offers £3500 TEL: 07840 167229



TRIUMPH T150T TRIDENT 1969

Total rebuild, Cafe racer spec, many original parts £8750 TEL: 07860 203331



VESPA PX 200 2002

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Edited by Gez Kane

Honda CB250K

Honda's well-built, reliable workhorse is underrated – and makes an ideal starter classic. But get in quick, the word is getting out...

PHOTOGRAPHY: BAUER ARCHIVE

nce ignored as 'just' a cheap and cheerful learner bike or commuter, Honda's CB250K is, at last, being properly appreciated. To be fair, the classic racing boys have been in on the secret for a while, snapping up every decent example of the CB250's big brother, the CB350K and turning them into freakishly fast race bikes. Now it's a job to find a good CB350K in road trim. So maybe the next best thing is the 250 version. But, if you fancy one, be quick – prices are shooting up and some mint examples are being offered for more than £4000.

The CB250K0, launched in 1968, was the long-awaited replacement for the CB72. While the CB72 had done great business for Honda, it was starting to look its age by then. The new 250 was pretty well allnew – and it looked it.

A tubular, single-downtube frame replaced the pressed steel item of the earlier model (though there was still a pressed-steel section behind the engine) and the engine sat almost vertically in it, for a start. But the changes were more than skin deep. The CB250K0 and its 350 (325.6cc to be exact) stablemate share the same bottom end, with a four-bearing 180° crank with central chain drive to the overhead camshaft.

The camshaft ran in a separate cam box bolted to the cylinder head, and the rockers pivoted on eccentric shafts that rotated to adjust valve clearance, while a five-speed gearbox helped make the most of a claimed 30bhp at a heady 10,500rpm. Primary drive was by straight-cut gears, CV carbs were adopted and there was a new, plunger-type oil pump. All in all, it

was a much more modern package than the old CB72/77 mill.

The cycle parts were conventional enough, though. The front brake was still a decent, workmanlike twin-leading-shoe drum and the forks were conservatively shrouded. But a separate speedo and rev counter plus more imaginative colour schemes helped make the CB250 look ready for a new decade.

External changes were minimal for the first six years of production. Some early camshafts failed, due either to faulty heat treatment or oil starvation caused by pieces of unsupported gasket material breaking off and blocking the oilways, and the hydraulic camchain tensioner fitted to the



ENGINE

Apart from camshaft and oil starvation issues (caused by gaskets breaking up) on very early models, there's not too much to worry about. If possible, check that you can adjust the valve clearances with the eccentric rocker shafts. If they're impossible to set correctly, it's a fair bet either the cams and/or followers and rocker shafts have suffered from the oil starvation problems. All major engine parts should be easy enough to source as NOS or good quality aftermarket items.

BODYWORK With bikes of this vintage, bodywork can be an issue. But with the CB250, some of the usual suspects like mudguards, side panels and side panel badges seem to turn up regularly on eBay, while David Silver spares can supply NOS side panels. CMS still have new mudguards for some models, too (though they're mighty expensive) and good used seats are getting hard to find - though reproduction K4 seats are available from AC-Motorradteile in Germany through eBay.

first models was swiftly replaced (many units under a warranty recall) by a revised, spring-loaded design. But once those few teething problems were resolved, most CB250s proved admirably resilient to the harsh treatment meted out by thousands of learner riders.

The first big change was the introduction of the G5 model in 1974. The G5 had a six-speed gearbox, a front disc brake and racy upswept silencers, but it also had more weight, less power (thanks to



usual age-related deterioration of wiring, connectors and components to watch out for. NOS switchgear is still available for most models, as are aftermarket combined regulator rectifiers

carb changes to control emissions). | CB350 sold by the truckload), And it somehow looked more sober than the K models it replaced. The revamped (and short-lived) CJ250 appeared in 1976, but it would give way the following year to the allnew, three-valve CB250T.

If you're tempted by a CB250K (which seem to be more desirable than the G5 and CJ variants), the paradox is this. Though Honda shifted thousands of them in the UK and Europe (the 250 wasn't available in America, though the

relatively few have survived intact and they are getting hard to find. Most were ridden into the ground by penniless young bloods or, slightly later in their life, by scrooge-like commuters eking out the last maintenance-free miles from what was by then just a cheap and cheerful hack.

The good news (for some of the same reasons) is that spares are fairly plentiful – and most are interchangeable with the **O**

BRAKES

Not usually an issue, but the twinleading-shoe front brake on a pre-G model will be hard to find. Check condition and operation before you buy.

ANALYSIS

BUYING

AUCTIONS

TIMELINE

1967: CB250. Japan-only model with new CB250K engine and frame, but CB72-style tank.

1968: CB250K0. Honda launches their all-new 250 to world markets to replace the CB72. The new model has a five-speed gearbox, tubular frame and more modern styling.

1969: CB250K1. Not sold in the UK and Europe, where the KO model continues to be available.

1970: CB350K2. Minor styling revisions, some engine updates.

1971: CB250K3. Restyled fuel tank with new colour and graphic scheme replacing the two-tone, slab-sided tank of the earlier CB models.

1972: CB250K4. Minor changes.

1973: K4 continues unchanged in the UK.

1974: G5 introduced. Six-speed gearbox and slightly detuned due to emissions legislation. The cylinder head design is different to the K models and no longer has the separate cam carrier casting on top. The cam runs directly in the head. Rounder styling with slightly upswept silencers. A K5 model is available in some markets - again with the revised engine.



1975: G5 continues.

1976: The new CJ250 becomes the last of the original CB250 line. Restyled, with no electric start and two-into-one exhaust. The following year the new three-valve-per-cylinder engine debuts in the CB250T Dream.



SPECIFICATION

1968 HONDA CB250K0

Engine: Air-cooled, ohc parallel twin

Bore x stroke: 56 x 50.6mm

Capacity: 249cc

Compression: 9.5:1

Claimed power: 30bhp at 10,500rpm

Carburettors: 2 x 28mm Keihins

Gearbox: Five-speed

Ignition: Coil

Brakes: 180mm/7in tls drum (front),

160mm/6.3in sls drum (rear)

Tyres: 3.00 x 18in front, 3.25 x 18in rear

Weight: 160kg/353lb



corresponding CB350 model. The specialist suppliers listed below all have pretty good stocks of mechanical and cycle parts, and there's tons of decent stuff on eBay. Original exhausts and seats are scarce (aftermarket silencers are available), but you should find just about anything else you might need.

Probably, a K4 would be about the best bet. All the mechanical mods should have been done and you'll still get the classic looks – and a bit more performance than the lardy G5. Go for a complete machine and consider whether rare items like original exhausts are on your must-have list before you take the plunge. Find a good one for less than £3000 and you've probably done OK. Find a good one for £2000 and you could be laughing.

Seek and ye shall find. Hopefully.

THE RIDE

First things first. For a 250 – especially a four-stroke 250 from the tail-end of the '60s - Honda's first CB250 is a quick machine. If it's in good mechanical order, it'll nudge 90mph on the road. And when Motorcycle Mechanics tested one in the less mechanically sympathetic world of new model testing at Brands Hatch in summer 1968, they managed to squeeze 94mph out of it. But even without resorting to the flat-on-the-tank antics their tester doubtless got up to, the CB250K is still pretty lively for a 250. In fact, there weren't many 350s - or even 500s - that were appreciably faster.

That speed comes at a cost, though. You need to get the Honda's ohc engine spinning above 7000rpm to get the full benefit of the (optimistically claimed) 30bhp.

'THERE WEREN'T MANY 350S OR EVEN 500S THAT WERE APPRECIABLY FASTER'

There's more than a touch of parallel-twin vibration between about 5000 and the magic 7000rpm, but hey, there's no gain without at least a little pain. If you don't mind keeping the revs up, the CB250K is certainly capable of providing a little excitement. Gradients and pillion passengers knock the edge off top-end performance, though, and you'll need to make the most of the five-speed gearbox to maintain reasonable progress. It's not a bad 'box, but after around half a

RESOURCES

David Silver

NOS and quality pattern parts. David also has his own Honda museum next to his warehouse in Leiston, Suffolk.

Davidsilverspares.co.uk

Honda Classics Restoration Services

Parts (NOS, reproduction and restored), manuals and workshop tools from former Honda dealer and Honda UK boss, Roger Etcell.

Honda-classics.co.uk

CMS

Netherlands-based supplier of NOS Honda parts with online parts diagrams for ease of ordering.

Cmsnl.com

century of use and abuse, some can be a bit noisy and notchy.

As with many bikes, later models are not quite as lively. Revisions to cams and carbs to meet tighter emissions regulations robbed a little pep after the K2, while the 1974 G5 is appreciably slower (and heavier) than the K-series bikes.

Handling is as good as most bikes of its era and, with sticky modern tyres fitted, you'll be able to appreciate the CB250K's sprightly performance. You might want to upgrade the rear shocks – the originals were marginally damped at best. The forks can feel a bit soggy on well-used examples, too, but aftermarket replacement springs should help improve things.

There's not a lot to choose between the K-series tls front brake and the single disc of the G5 (and CJ). But the rear drum is perfectly adequate and, unless you're riding harder than you really ought to be on a '60s/'70s 250, you shouldn't frighten yourself too much.

You might just be surprised at how much fun you can have on a 'mere' 250. A K-series machine is probably more desirable than a G5 or CJ, but even the later models can be fun on the right roads. You get civility, too. Electric start and indicators help to make living with a CB250 on today's roads easy.

That's what the CB250 is all about. It's easy to live with, easy to maintain and easy to ride. Find the right bike and it might just be (relatively) easy to afford, too. •

EXHAUSTS

There are still a few NOS exhausts about, but they are very expensive, so look carefully at the condition of the silencers in particular. It's worth remembering that a lot of chrome-platers won't touch used exhausts.

PRICES

CB25OK

MINT £3500-4000 GOOD £2000-3000 PROJECT £400-1000



A YAMAHA TÉNÉRÉ & EXPERIENCE



Terms and conditions: The prize draw closes at midnight May 31, 2020. This prize draw is open to UK residents aged 19 and over and holding the appropriate motorcycle license. There is one prize which consists of one new Yamaha Ténéré 700 motorcycle including delivery to the Yamaha UK mainland or NI dealer closest to the winners home address, pre-delivery inspection, first registration fee, 12 months of UK vehicle tax. Insurance is not included and registration is subject to winner providing insurance. The motorcycle will also be fitted with the Yamaha Explorer Pack (37ltr aluminum side cases, side case mounts, main stand, heavy duly skid plate, mono seat rack, engine side guards), Fog light kit for below headlight. The winner will receive one Yamaha Adventure jacket and trousers (winner must choose from available sizes), one place on the 2020 Yamaha Ténéré Experience including hire bike, tuition and riding gear, plus one nights accommodation at a local hotel on room only basis. Winner must choose from available dates during 2020. Travel to and from the experience or hotel and food and drinks are not included. The winner will be the first name drawn at random after the closing date. The winner will be notified by email within ten days of the closing date and has 30 days to respond before an alternative winner is chosen. This prize may be offered in a limited number of other promotions. No purchase is necessary, to enter for free visit www.motorcyclenews.com/winatenere. Full terms and conditions can be found at www.bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html



High stakes in Vegas

Millions of dollars, more than 1500 bikes – Mecum's Las Vegas sale just gets bigger and better

ecum's 29th Las Vegas sale on January 21-26 proved to be one of their biggest yet. A staggering 1540 bikes went past the block during the six days of non-stop auction action – and an impressive 90% of them sold. A total sale of \$22.6 million (£17.43 million) told the overall story, but there were plenty of sub-plots, too.

Topping the heap was a superb, 1922 Brough Superior MkI 90-bore. Pre-dating the SS100, the MkI is a rare model indeed – it's thought that only two examples featuring the JAP 90-bore, 1000cc ohv engine may have



30 examples that were made in 1966

RIGHT: BSA Victor

B44 is one of only

LEFT: Ducati 750SS had been treated to a nut-and-bolt restoration



survived to the present day. Magnificently restored, it made \$308,000 (£237,579).

An ultra-rare 1940 Harley-Davidson Knucklehead, factory finished in green, sold for serious money, too – \$220,000 (£169,699) – while a 1974 Ducati 750SS, the subject of a nut-and-bolt restoration, continued that model's upward trend at auction by making \$198,000 (£152,485). A 1956 Harley-Davidson custom 'Grease Monkey', built by legendary customiser Indian Larry, also sold for \$220,000 (£169,688).

But it wasn't just the heavyweight iron that stepped up. A superbly restored 1960 Honda CB92 rattled up to \$18,700 (£14,425) and a 1966 BSA Victor – thought to be one of just 30 examples built that year – sold for an impressive \$24,200 (£18,637).

BONHAMS LAS VEGAS SALE JAN 23



Model 18J Harley-Davidson of 1918 vintage

On the move

Mixed fortunes for Bonhams in new Vegas venue

A new venue and some idiosyncratic lots may have conspired to lower the percentage of bikes sold at Bonhams recent Las Vegas sale, but the amount raised still managed to total just over £3 million.

Successes on the day included a lovely, 1918 Harley-Davidson Model 18J that sold for \$88,550 (£68,430), while an extremely rare, 1956 Triumph TR5R production racer made \$25,300 (£19,551).

The Triumph is one of just 104 built that year for selected 500cc class racers. Thought to be one of only 13 survivors, the beautifully restored machine features the correct racing cams, highcompression pistons and racing exhaust, together with an ultra-rare, aftermarket TriCor splayed-port cylinder head with larger valves and twin carburettors.

Traditional auction favourites also performed well, with a 1949 Vincent Black Shadow making \$97,750 (£75,540) and a partdismantled 1929 Brough Superior 680 ohv project selling for \$126,000 (£97,371). The auction world still loves a project!



Seldom seen: Triumph TR5R production racer



JEREMY CURZON

CHEFFINS

'The classic bike auction world is still an adventure'

e do things a little bit differently at Cheffins. Maybe it's because we come from a slightly different background than most of the other big auction houses. We're rooted firmly in the rural community, having been part of the Cambridge/Essex/East Anglian scene for years. And that gives a unique approach to selling classic bikes.

My remit when I joined Cheffins was to build up the bike sales. I've done that, but along the way I noticed that the same people who turned up at our motorcycle sales also attended our vintage sales where we sold trucks, tractors and the occasional interesting car. So it made sense to combine the bike sales with the commercial vehicles and tractors.

The result is regular attendances of over 2000 people at our vintage sales – with many of them bidding on both bikes and other vehicles. It seems to work for us, and our buyers' premium of just eight per cent and a negotiable sellers' premium starting at 7.5 per cent works for our clients, too.

Our rural client base often have the space to indulge in their collecting passion. The farming community is a case in point.

Farms often get handed down in families, and grandad's bikes have often just been squirrelled away. I remember a Brough Superior we consigned that had been pulled out of a hedge on a farm. Then there was a widow I went to see in Norfolk about some cars. I asked if her late husband was into bikes to and she said she thought so. She let me look round all his sheds and workshops and I found 12 bikes – all hidden under workbenches – including a superb, original Triumph TR5T, complete with the factory Q/D lighting. What a find. The lady didn't know all those bikes were there - or what they were potentially worth.

The classic bike auction world is still an adventure. There are a lot of sheds out there and I haven't been in all of them – yet. There are still a lot of bikes to be found in them – and they've all got stories. That's what we buy into. I don't think we'll run out of exciting discoveries any time soon.

Jeremy Curzon has worked full-time at Cheffins since 2004. The self-confessed classic bike nut is now director of on-site machinery and vintage sales and currently runs a fleet of eight self-restored classics.

AUCTION DATES

11-14 Mecum sale at State Farm Stadium, Glendale, Arizona USA. mecum.com

14 Spicers sale at Sledmere House, Sledmere, East Yorkshire. spicersauctioneers.com

19 Dorset Vintage and Classic Auctions sale at Henstridge Airfield, Henstridge, Somerset. dvca.co.uk

21 Mathewsons sale at Roxby **25/26 Bonhams sale** at Garage, Thornton-le-Dale, North Yorkshire. mathewsons.co.uk

APRIL

7 H&H Auctions sale at The National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham. handh.co.uk

18 Cheffins sale at Sutton, Elv, Cambridgeshire. cheffins.co.uk

Staffordshire County Showground, Stafford. bonhams.com

25: Mathewsons sale at Roxby Garage, Thornton-le-Dale, North Yorkshire. mathewsons.co.uk

MAY

21 Brightwells sale at Easters Court, Leominster, Herefordshire. brightwells.com







crankshaft, barrels and five-speed gearbox. The rest of the machine is equally well-crafted and features topdrawer café racer components including a Grimeca four-leading-shoe front brake, Roadholder forks and handmade Manx pattern fuel and oil tanks.

Other bikes confirmed for the sale include an immaculate 1954, 349cc Velocette MAC (estimate £4500-5000) and a very tidy, 1959 Norton 497cc Dominator 88 offered with an estimate of £5500-6500. Andy Spicer estimates there will be 30-40 bikes on offer at the Driffield saleroom by the time the catalogue closes.

ESTIMATE

Café culture

Tip-top Triton spices up Spicers' spring sale

ABOVE: Triton combines a **Wideline Norton** Featherbed frame and Triumph 6T/ T140 engine

Things are shaping up nicely for Spicers' first sale of 2020, with a number of interesting machines already consigned. This nicely presented Triton (estimate £12,000-15,000) is one of them; it combines a Wideline Norton Featherbed frame with an engine built on Triumph 6T crankcases with a T140





Hitting the heights

Stunning works Excelsior hillclimbers tick all the right boxes at Mecum's Glendale sale

Chances to own a genuine works machine are rare enough, but when the machine in question is an alcohol-burning 1930 Excelsior Super X with an outstanding and well documented record, it's even more unusual. This machine is being offered in 'as last raced' condition and comes with its own display case, a period toolbox and one of the trophies it amassed a long and successful American Hillclimb Championship career. Raced to the national title in 1928 and 1929 in the hands of Joe Petrali, and Gene Rhyne in 1930. Subsequently, it was campaigned by top privateer Al Lauer.

Amazingly, there's also a restored 1926 Excelsior Super X works flat-track hillclimber – formerly owned by Steve McQueen – in the same sale. Take your pick.

LEFT: 1930 Excelsion Super X enjoyed a hillclimb career

long, successful US

CHARTERHOUSE REVIEW FEB 2

Fancy a Martini?

Rare Yamaha raises eyebrows – and the bidding paddles – at Bristol show sale

When was the last time you saw one of these? This 1989 Yamaha XS1100 Martini Special may not have been in pristine condition, but it was complete and eminently restorable. Its rarity – just 500 were built and only 65 were UK registered – meant that interest was keen. The John Mockett-designed fairing reportedly worked extremely well and the big XS proved a very capable long-distance tourer. It sold for £4000.

A 1956 BSA DBD34 Gold Star, with its engine freshly rebuilt by a respected marque specialist, made £20,160, and a tidy and original 1951 Sunbeam S7 sold for £6940. With machines unsold at the show offered for sale again a week later at Charterhouse's classic car sale, a respectable 75% of the bikes catalogued for the February 2 sale have now been sold.



RIGHT: 1989 Yamaha XS1100 Martini Special is one of just 65 originally registered in the UK

Cambridge Vintage Auction

The Saleground, Sutton, Ely, Cambs CB6 2QT



CHEFFINS

For advice on buying or selling please call 01353 777767 or email vintage@cheffins.co.uk Catalogues available from the auctioneers two weeks prior for £17 by post.

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